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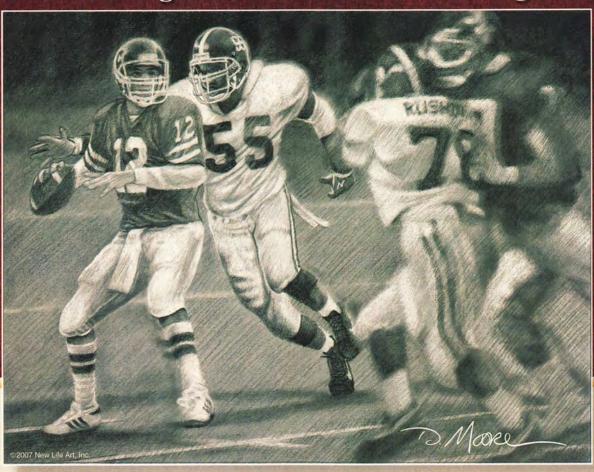
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Letter from the Editor

Dear Fellow Crimson Tide Fans.

In the month or so leading up to kickoff, I get a lot of requests to make a prediction about the upcoming season. How will Alabama do? Who will win the Southeastern Conference division titles and the SEC Championship Game? Who should be expected to win the national championship?

Back in the early 1980s, when the Paul Bryant Era of Alabama football was nearing an end, I was asked who I thought would win a game in which Bama was to play. I said, "I always think Alabama is going to win and I'm almost always right."

That was true then. And it continued to be a reasonable reply through the 1980s and 1990s, though not to the extent it had been in the Bryant years.

And that answer has been like whistling past the graveyard in the New Millennium. Except for a couple of decent seasons (by Alabama standards), the 21st century hasn't begun too well.

Now Nick Saban, the coach with national championship credentials who is supposed to right this Crimson Tide ship, tells me to be realistic. He says it's probably not bad to be optimistic and probably is bad to be pessimistic.

It seems wherever I go and to whomever I talk among football people the consensus opinion is that Saban is a great coach and will return Alabama to its glory days. I like that. Then they tell me I have to be patient.

Saban keeps reminding me that his first LSU team lost to UAB. I hate it when I hear that. I am sitting down, quietly, being patient. I am considering the facts, being realistic. Ummm? 11-1. (I'm not picking the bowl game yet. That would be foolish.)

Okay, I know that more than one team on Alabama's schedule is considered to have better material than the Crimson Tide. I'd even agree that two of those teams-LSU and Auburn-have more good players than Alabama. Some would say that Arkansas and Georgia and FSU and Tennessee have an edge in material.

I am not an expert on other teams. Well, I'm not an expert on Alabama, either, in the sense that I know football like a coach does. But over the last few years I've seen Alabama players going toe-to-toe with very good teams, including last year with the national champion Florida Gators. Bama teams in recent years have folded late. Crimson Tide players have played well, but haven't been able to close the deal, such as a second-and-goal situation turning into a field goal.

Years ago I was talking to the best coach ever about an upcoming game between two other teams. He said, "Go with the best coach."

Maybe that's why I don't want to be patient. I think Alabama has the best coach. I agree with Simeon Castille. He said he wasn't out there in the heat of summer running sprints so the team could go 8-4.

So how can I pick Alabama to go 11-1 when I admit the Tide probably doesn't have as many good players as two opponents? Easy. Those opponents are late in the season, and by then Saban will have developed his players to the point that Alabama wins the manpower war.

In fact, that 11-1 guess may have been pessimistic.

I'll admit that it would surprise me for Alabama to go undefeated. But it wouldn't surprise me to see the Crimson Tide do better than most of the patient, realistic prognosticators, and for Saban and Bama to be one of the biggest stories in college football this year.

Sincerely, Kirk McNair Editor

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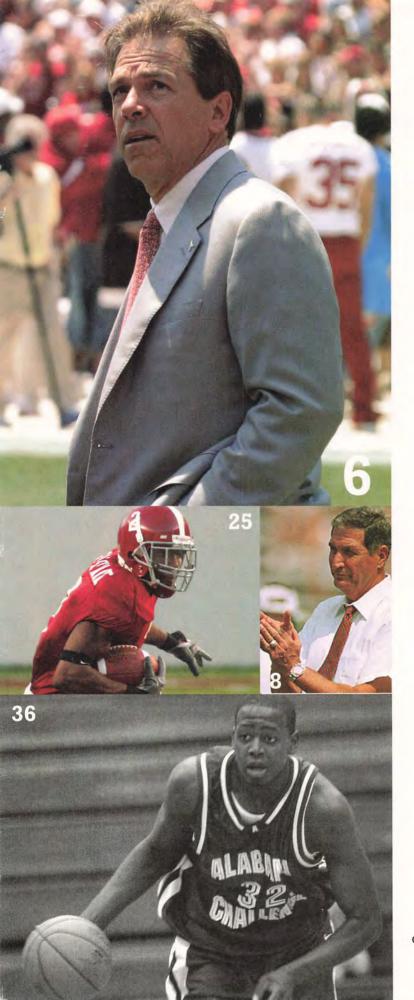
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Cover and centerspread photos of Simeon Castille by Kent Gidley

It's Not Easy Being Green

First year can be difficult for Alabama coach

ormer Alabama Football Coach Gene Stallings could joke about it after he had won a national championship and put up 70 wins in his seven-year Alabama career. His advice to future coaches: "Not to start his career with three straight losses."

Stallings said, "When people ask me about big wins, my first thought is always the Vanderbilt game of 1990. That usually brings a puzzled look from people who know Alabama football. But we had lost three tough games to start that season, then finally got our first win over Vanderbilt."

Stallings first season resulted in a record of 7-5, which was the worst record of his seven seasons. That first record was disappointing, because Stallings inherited a team that had tied for the Southeastern Conference championship with a 10-2 record.

There are a number of factors in the record of any team, and some of them stand out for first-year coaches.

As is usually the case, Nick Saban is the coach at Alabama because the decision was made that his predecessor, Mike Shula, was not doing a good job. Saban inherited a team that had a disappointing 6-7 record in 2006.

And among the factors that will go into this year's record is that the 2006 team and the 2007 team have different playing components as well as coaching components.

Like most "first-year" coaches, Saban is far from a rookie. He has been a very, very successful head coach, a national champion coach.

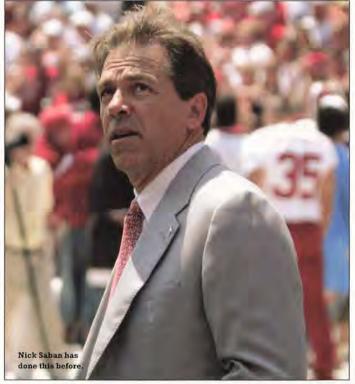
It has been 15 years since Alabama put a national championship team on the field. That's a long time in Crimson Tide years. But with the exception of Stallings, no other coach had much of a chance to be a big winner.

Mike DuBose was truly a green head coach when he took over the Alabama job prior to the 1997 season. His only head coaching experience had been in high school. The 4-7 record was the result of that experiment, and after four years DuBose was out the door with a 24-23 record.

Dennis Franchione might have been a very good coach at Alabama, but he didn't stick around long enough to see if he could cut it. Instead, he cut and ran after only two years-a 7-5 record in his first year, a 10-3 mark in his second.

Mike Price never had a first year.

Few people have come into a more difficult situation than did Mike Shula. He was hired in May, had to piece



Stuart McNair

together a coaching staff of men mostly who either didn't have jobs, or who had been hired by Price. He changed the offense during the August practices. And his first team went 4-9.

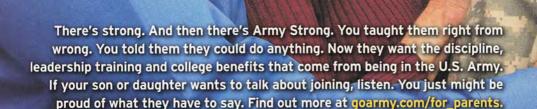
Shula, who also suffered the ramifications of unprecedented harsh NCAA penalties, would have only one winning season, a remarkable 10-2 campaign in his third year.

The third year of a head coach has historically been very good. Stallings won a national championship in his third year. DuBose won the SEC title in his third season.

There have been exceptions to that "third year" success. J.B. "Ears" Whitworth was 2-7-1 in his third year, the same as his second. Nevertheless, quite an improvement over his first year as head coach in 1955 when Alabama was 0-10.

The good news about Whitworth's terrible record is that it forced The University to take drastic steps. Paul W. Bryant was hired as Alabama's head coach. In his first season he







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faced the difficult task of opening the season against an LSU team that would win the national championship (one of two for the Bengal Tigers). That Bama lost was no surprise to anyone in Ladd Stadium in Mobile. But the game was closer than the 13-3 margin and promised a new era. No one could imagine what an era it would be.

Bryant's first season produced a 5-4-1 record. The Crimson Tide had a winning record for the first time in five years and had won one more game than Bama had managed in three years under Whitworth.

The remarkable Bryant would go on to an Alabama record of 232-46-9 and six national championships. That first season would be Bama's only year under Bryant in which there was not a bowl game at the end.

It's reasonable to assume that good coaches do better than poor coaches in the first season. That would be true for every season.

But common sense tells one that it is advantageous to take over a team loaded with good players than it is to have to completely rebuild.

Stallings and Shula took over teams that had won 10 games the previous season.

Frank Thomas stepped into a pretty good situation. Prior to the 1930 season, future Hall of Fame Coach Wallace Wade announced that he would resign from The University at the

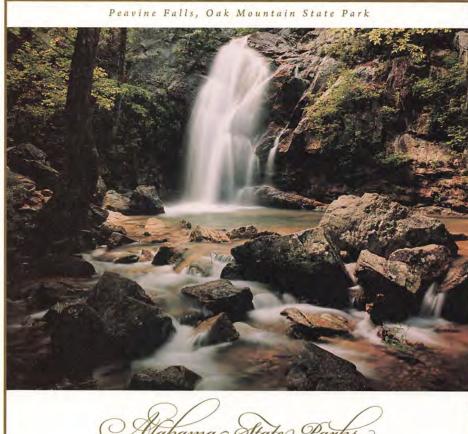
end of the year. That final Wade team went 10-0, including a 24-0 win over Washington State in the Rose Bowl. That was the good news. The bad news was that Alabama partisans were getting antsy about this new coach who went 9-1 in 1931, 8-2 in 1932, and 7-1-1 in 1933. Talk about depression! Alabama did win the initial SEC championship in 1933. And Thomas got his Hall of Fame career untracked in 1934 when Bama went 10-0, including a 29-13 win over Stanford in the Rose Bowl.

Thomas' 1945 team was 10-0 and also a Rose Bowl winner (34-14 over Southern Cal), but he was ill the next year and his last Crimson Tide squad fell to 7-4. That brought on H.D. "Red" Drew, whose first team improved by a game to 8-3.

Even Wade had taken over a good team. Xen Scott, a full-time sportswriter in Cleveland, Ohio, was Bama's part-time coach following World War I. He coached Bama to an 8-1 record in his first season in 1919 and the Crimson Tide produced its first ever 10-win season the next year, 10-1 in 1920.

Bryant and Saban weren't the only coaches to take over Alabama teams that had a losing record the previous season. Whitworth, for one, did. He followed Drew, whose 1954 team went 4-5-2.

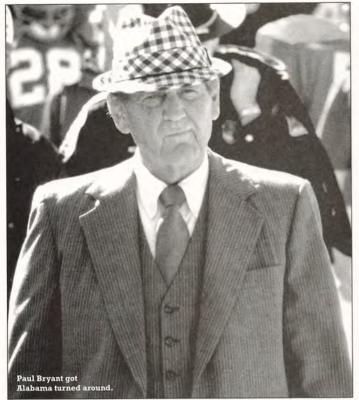
The argument can be made that Ray Perkins had the most difficult first year assignment of any Alabama coach. He had to replace Bryant. The final Bryant team in 1982 was only 8-4 and the first Perkins team matched that mark. But





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University of Alabama

when Perkins went 5-6 the next season, Bama natives were restless. In his fourth year, Bryant won the first of his national championships. Perkins' fourth year was his last as Bryant's successor.

That last Perkins team was 10-3 and Curry inherited that squad. Curry dropped to 7-5 in his first year, almost exactly what Stallings would do.

Every situation is different. In Saban's case, Alabama didn't have a good record in 2006, but the Tide played toe-to-toe with very good teams. (Bama also played down to bad teams, which many would say is more a reflection on coaches than players.)

An adage has it that a coach doesn't want to do too well in his first season. He wants to leave room for improvement, doesn't want to get expectations too high. That doesn't take into account that coaches are extraordinarily competitive, and a competitor doesn't think that way.

Saban was pretty good in his first year as a head coach. In 1990 he was the head coach at Toledo and went 9-2. His first year as head coach at Michigan State in 1995 was a 6-5-1 record. At LSU he took over for Gerry DiNardo in 2000. DiNardo had gone 3-8. Saban went 8-4, followed by a 10-3 record in his second season. Like Bryant at Bama, in his fourth year at LSU Saban won a national championship.

No one doubts that Saban is an excellent coach.

Alabama has some strengths in players, but also has some deficiencies. And there are always the factors of any season, including injury luck and how difficult the competition is.

No matter the outcome of his first season, expect Alabama Coach Nick Saban to be very successful in the long run.

Alabama Coaches' Records

WON-LOST-TIED	FIRSTYR
2-2-0	2-2-0
1902 7-12-0	0-4-0
2-1-0	2-1-0
1-0-0	1-0-0
3-1-0	3-1-0
2-3-0	2-3-0
2-1-2	2-1-2
10-7-0	3-4-0
6-4-0	6-4-0
20-4-5	5-1-0
4-4-0	4-4-0
21-12-3	5-2-2
17-7-1	6-2-0
29-9-3	8-1-0
61-13-3	7-2-1
115-24-7	9-1-0
55-29-7	8-3-0
4-24-2	0-10-0
232-46-9	5-4-1
32-15-1	8-4-0
26-10-0	7-5-0
70-16-1	7-5-0
00 24-23-0	4-7-0
17-8-0	7-5-0
26-24-0	4-9-0

2007 Alabama

No	NAME, POS	CL	нт	WT	EX	PHOMETOWN	No	NAME, POS	CL	нт	WT	EX	PHOMETOWN
2	Simeon Castille, LCB	SR	6-1	193	3L	Birmingham	*26	Hampton Gray, DB	so	6-2	198	SQ	Tuscaloosa
3	Kareem Jackson, RCB	FR	5-11	185	HS	Macon, Ga.	27	Justin Woodall, S	so	6-2	224	11	Oxford, Miss.
4	Marquis Maze, WR	FR	5-9	167	HS	Birmingham	28	Javier Arenas, RCB	so	5-8	193	1L	Tampa, Fla.
5	Roy Upchurch, TB	so	6-0	192	11	Tallahassee, Fla.	29	Terry Grant, TB	FR	5-10	188	RS	Lumberton, Miss.
6	Marcel Stamps, SLB	SR	6-2	199	3L	Brantley	30	Patrick Hanrahan, FB	FR	6-0	232	RS	Springville
*6	Wm Vandervoort, QB	so	6-3	190	SQ	Anniston	*30	Rajiv Lundy, DB	so	6-0	195	Tr	Willingboro, N.J.
7	Will Oakley, FL	JR	6-1	196	1L	Ponte Vedra Bch, Fla.	31	Forress Rayford, DB	SR	5-11	176	SQ	Mobile
*7	Adam Hill, P	FR	5-10	188	RS	Douglasville, Ga.	32	Eryk Anders, WLB	so	6-2	225	SQ	San Antonio, Texas
8	Chris Rogers, S	so	5-11	192	1L	Lakeland, Fla.	33	Demetrius Goode, RB	FR	5-10	197	HS	LaGrange, Ga.
9	Nikita Stover, FL	JR	6-0	207	1L	Hartselle	34	Jeramie Griffin, FB	FR	6-0	225	HS	Batesville, Miss.
*9	Heath Thomas, P	so	6-3	202	SQ	Montgomery	34	Courtney Moore, DB	JR	5-10	194	SQ	Florence
10	Jimmy Johns, FB	JR	6-3	230	2L	Brookhaven, Miss.	35	Charlie Kirschman, LB	FR	6-2	228	RS	St. Augustine, Fla.
*10	Justin Martin, P	so	5-9	203	SQ	Thomson, Ga.	36	Eric Gray, RCB	SR	6-0	195	3L	Trinity
11	Matt Caddell, FL	SR	6-0	187	3L	McCalla	37	Tyrone King, LCB	JR	5-10	190	SQ	Birmingham
13	Cory Reamer, WLB/DB	so	6-4	223	Sq	Hoover	*37	Trent Dean, S	JR	5-11	188	SQ	Decatur
14	John Parker Wilson, QB	JR	6-2	213	1L	Hoover	38	Glen Coffee, TB	so	6-2	197	1L	Ft. Walton Bch, Fla.
15	Darius Hanks, WR	FR	6-0	190	HS	Norcross, Ga.	*38	Joel Nix, LB	so	6-0	230	SQ	Trussville
*15	Andrew Friedman, PK	so	6-1	202	SQ	Fairhope	39	Darwin Salaam, WR	JR	6-3	187	SQ	Madison
16	Lionel Mitchell, RCB	JR	6-2	182	11	Stone Mtn, Ga.	*39	Justin Dunn, LB	so	6-0	225	SQ	Bessemer
16	Thomas Darrah, QB	FR	6-5	190	HS	Newnan, Ga.	40	Baron Huber, FB	so	6-3	242	SQ	Knoxville, Tenn.
*16	James Denton, QB	FR	6-1	205	RS	Charlottesville, Va.	*40	Tucker Callahan, LB	JR	6-2	228	SQ	Fairhope
17	Greg McElroy, QB	FR	6-2	218	RS	Southlake, Texas	41	Chris Lett, S	FR	6-2	191	HS	Pensacola, Fla.
18	Nick Fanuzzi, QB	FR	6-3	201	HS	San Antonio, Texas	*41	Cliff Murphy, WR	so	6-1	195	SQ	Anniston
19	Tarence Farmer, DB-WR	FR	6-0	195	HS	Houston, Texas	42	Jennings Hester, LB	FR	6-2	224	HS	Atlanta, Ga.
19	Ross Applegate, QB	FR	6-5	197	TR	Marietta, Ga.	43	Sam Burnthall, S	so	6-2	185	1L	Decatur
*19	Patrick Eades, P	SR	6-2	185	SQ	Hoover	43	A.J. Walker, WR	FR	6-1	185	HS	Huntsville
20	Marcus Carter, SS	SR	6-0	205	3L	Fort Payne	44	Demarcus Waldrop, SLB	SR	5-11	203	3L	Pînson
21	Prince Hall, MLB	SO	5-11	235	11	Moreno Valley, Calif.	*44	Jacob Vane, FB	FR	6-0	235	SQ	Oak Ridge, Tenn.
22	D.J. Hall, FL	SR	6-2	195	3L	Ft Walton Bch, Fla.	45	Ch. Higgenbotham, MLB	FR	6-1	211	RS	Birmingham
*22	Austin Clifford, DB	so	6-0	187	SQ	Stuart, Fla.	*45	Reyn Willis, SE	so	6-4	212	SQ	Raleigh, N.C.
23	Tremayne Coger, CB	FR	5-11	190	RS	Columbia, Tenn.	46	Zach Schreiber, SLB	so	6-1	212	11	Shreveport, La.
24	Marquis Johnson, LCB	so	5-11	186	1L	Sarasota, Fla.	46	Kyle Pennington, WR	FR	5-11	170	HS	Chatom
*24	Chris Pugh, WR	so	6-4	185	SQ	Moulton	47	Zeke Knight, SLB	JR	6-4	235	3L	Wedowee
25	Rolando McClain, LB	FR	6-4	255	HS	Decatur	48	Travis Sikes, WR	FR	6-2	195	RS	Nashville, Tenn.
*25	Alex Benson, LB	so	6-2	215	SQ	Trussville	49	Rashad Johnson, SS	JR	6-0	187	2L	Sulligent
26	Ali Sharrief, S	so	5-9	197	1L	Stevenson							

Football Roster

No	NAME, POS	CL	нт	WT	EX	PHOMETOWN	No	NAME, POS		CL	нт	W	EX	PHOMETOWN
50	Justin Britt, LG	SR	6-5	284	3L	Cullman	81	Keith Brown, SE		SR	6-3	194	3L	Pensacola, Fla.
*50	Cy Ellis, LB	so	5-11	210	SQ	Killen	82	Earl Alexander, WR		FR	6-5	210	RS	Phenix City
51	Michael DeJohn, LB	FR	6-0	220	HS	Birmingham	83	Travis McCall, TE		JR	6-2	261	2L	Prattville
*51	Andrew Franklin, LB	FR	6-2	226	HS	Trussville	84	Brandon Gibson, WR		FR	6-2	190	HS	Mobile
52	Alfred McCullough, DT	FR	6-2	317	HS	Athens	85	Preston Dial, TE		FR	6-3	223	RS	Mobile
*52	Brian Cooper, LB	so	6-2	198	SQ	Abbott, Texas	86	Jamie Christensen, PK		SR	6-0	177	3L	Norcross, Ga.
53	Paul Silvey, SN	FR	5-11	215	HS	Prattville	87	Chris Underwood, TE		FR	6-4	226	HS	Vestavia Hills
*53	Joe Robinson, LB	so	5-11	230	SQ	Birmingham	88	Nick Walker, TE		JR	6-5	255	2L	Brundidge
54	Jeremy Elder, DE	FR	6-3	271	HS	College Park, Ga.	89	Charles Hoke, TE		JR	6-7	253	1L	Birmingham
55	Chavis Williams, DE	FR	6-4	214	HS	Dora	90	Milton Talbert, LDE		FR	6-3	252	RS	Hattiesburg, Miss.
56	Matt Collins, DT	SR	6-1	246	3L	Clay	91	Alex Watkins, DE		FR	6-4	225	HS	Brownsville, Tenn.
57	Darren Mustin, SLB	SR	6-2	235	11.	Brentwood, Tenn.	*91	Stabler Gray, DL		JR	6-7	245	SQ	Tuscaloosa
58	Nick Gentry, DT	FR	6-1	263	HS	Prattville	92	Wallace Gilberry, LDE		SR	6-3	267	3L	Bay Minette
59	Antoine Caldwell, C	JR	6-3	292	2L	Montgomery	93	Bobby Greenwood, RI		JR.	6-5	267	2L	Prattville
59	Mitch Ray, LB	FR	6-0	202	RS	Birmingham	94	Keith Saunders, JLB		SR	6-4	251	2L	Willingboro, N.J.
60	Scott Deaton, RG	so	6-6	286	SQ	Birmingham	*94	Mike Sparks, PK		FR	6-3	200	RS	Logansville, Ga.
61	B.J. Stabler, RT	JR	6-4	294	2L	Grove Hill	95	Brandon Deaderick, D	т	so	6-4	286		Elizabethton, Ky.
62	Alex Stadler, RG	FR	6-5	299	RS	Bealeton, Va.	95	Colin Gallagher, PK		FR	6-0	180		Atlanta, Ga.
*62	Lance Vickers, DL	FR	6-4	250	RS	Athens	96	Luther Davis, DE		FR	6-4	275		West Monroe, La.
63	Morgan Garner, C	SR	6-1	271	SQ	Deatsville	96	Daniel Wood, TE		so	6-2	237		McCalla
		JR	6-4	262	SQ	Florence	97	Lorenzo Washington, I	יייכ	so	6-4	283		Loganville, Ga.
64	Layne Rinks, DT	P.A.	6-1	316	SQ	Tuscaloosa	97	P.J. Fitzgerald, P		so	5-11			Coral Springs, Fla.
65	Joshua Curry, DT	SR			RS	Autaugaville	98	Brandon Fanney, JLB		so	6-4	241		Morristown, Tenn.
66	Brian Motley, DT	FR	6-2	280			99	Josh Chapman, DT		FR	6-1	300		Birmingham
67	Brian Selman, SN	JR	6-0	218	SQ	Vestavia Hills				SO	6-1	198		Red Bay
68	Taylor Pharr, RG	FR	6-6	281	RS	Irondale	99	Leigh Tiffin, PK		30	0-1	190	, 111	ned bay
69	Patrick Crump, OL	FR	6-3	267	HS	Birmingham	* On	spring roster, but not o	п еа	rly rep	ortin	g roste	er of 105	
70	Evan Cardwell, C	so	6-2	278	1L	Killen	IINI	BLE TO REPORT FOR	BCB	DEMI	CRE	ASON	2	
71	Andre Smith, LT	so	6-5	340	1L	Birmingham	100	y Murphy		6-4	300			ham (Hoover)
72	Chris Capps, LT	SR	6-6	298	3L	Jonesboro, Ga.	1	ael Ricks	S	6-2	185	4.44	Courtlan	nd (NE Mississippi CC)
73	William Vlachos, OL	FR	6-1	295	HS	Mountain Brook								
74	David Ross, LG	FR	6-4	297	RS	Homewood	13.50	LONGER ON ROSTER	_		100	0.5	** 0	
75	Cody Davis, LT	JR	6-6	283	2L	Tuscaloosa	20	Tyrone Prothro, FL Jonathan Lowe, WR	SR	5-8	178 180		Heflin Phenix	City
76	Marlon Davis, RG	JR	6-4	290	2L	Columbus, Ga.	25	Aaron McDaniel, WR	JR	6-0	188		F ort	
78	Mike Johnson, RT	so	6-6	298	11	Pensacola, Fla.	39	Jamar Taylor, TB	FR	5-10			Lakelar	
79	Drew Davis, LT	so	6-7	276	SQ	Evergreen	77	Byron Walton, DT	so	6-3	306		Trinity	
80	Mike McCoy, WR	so	6-3	199	11	Rankin, Miss.	84	Jake Jones, WR	FR	5-11	177	RS	Birming	gham



Rick Stewart/Getty

CFN's 10 Greatest College Football Finishes

By Pete Fiutak, CollegeFootballNews.com

There are great games, and then there are great endings which often define programs and the history of the sport. Which finishes are the best, most important, and most exciting since 1970? It's all debatable, but as far as endings that stand the test of time, and have transcended the sport, can anything beat Kevin Moen and Cal's win over Stanford in 1982?

FLORIDA STATE 18 NEBRASKA 16 ORANGE BOWL JANUARY 1, 1994

At the time: The 1993 Huskers were the forgotten team. In a year that saw an epic seasonlong battle in the polls between Notre Dame and Florida State, Nebraska came in 11-0 and ranked No. 1. 11-1 Florida State had lost to Notre Dame, but got its shot at the Huskers after the Irish lost on a last-second kick to Boston College.

The setup: The defenses were the stars early in a 0-0 first quarter. After a Seminole field goal, the Huskers struck as Tommie Frazier, known as a running quarterback, tossed a pass into a crowd that was deflected into the hands of Reggie Ball who took it for his first touchdown of the season. But the Noles kicking game kept them alive as Scott Bentley nailed a second field goal to put FSU within one at halftime. The second half belonged to unstoppable Nebraska freshman running back Lawrence Phillips, but the Huskers were still down 15-13 with three minutes to play. Nebraska kicker Byron Bennett was 0-for-4 since kicking his last field goal two-and-a-half months earlier and had missed two field goals in the previous year's Orange Bowl. After a great defensive stand by the Noles from the five-yard line, Bennett came in and coolly gave the Huskers a 16-15 lead punching it through the same uprights that saw Florida State miss a kick in Wide Right II against Miami in 1992.

The ending: With 1:16 to play, the ball was in the hands of FSU's Heisman Trophy winner Charlie Ward who was having an efficient, but unspectacular, game. A Ward pass to Warrick Dunn, and a personal foul penalty on Nebraska, followed by a pass interference call set up a Bentley field goal for an 18-16 win. Not quite. A celebration penalty resulted in the Huskers getting the ball near midfield with:14 to play. Frazier, after one incompletion, completed a pass over the middle with one second to go. The clock read :00 and Seminole head coach Bobby Bowden was given a Gatorade bath while he was giving a post-game interview wearing a national champion hat with fans pouring onto the field. But no. The fates of the college football world wouldn't make it so easy

to give Bowden his first national title. The officials put one second back on the clock ruling that the Husker receiver was down. Bennett would get a final shot to break the hearts of Seminole fans, but there was nothing to worry about as he badly hooked the 45-yard attempt.

How they ended up: Despite the win, there was still some controversy for Florida State being ranked No. 1 and national champion despite losing to Notre Dame and each finishing with one loss. Nebraska finished third in both polls.

OHIO STATE 31 MIAMI 24 OT FIESTA BOWL JANUARY 3, 2003

At the time: Defending national champion Miami was 12-0 and the heavy favorites in the national championship against a 13-0 Ohio State team that wasn't always dominant, but always found a way to win.

The setup: After taking a 7-0 lead

on a Ken Dorsey strike to Roscoe Parrish, it appeared that Miami was on its way to an easy win with the Buckeyes not getting a first down until late in the first quarter. The Buckeyes finally got moving midway through the second quarter. After OSU quarterback Craig Krenzel was stuffed on third down on the goal line, head coach Jim Tressel had his first really big decision of the game. He went for it and Krenzel was barely able to get in to tie it at seven. The Buckeyes kept the Canes on their heels in the second half, but after a 57-yard pass play to Chris Gamble, disaster almost struck. Miami's Sean Taylor made a big play preventing an Ohio State touchdown with an interception, but OSU RB Maurice Clarett was able to catch up and rip the ball away from behind to give the Buckeyes the ball back leading to a 44-yard Mike Nugent field goal for a 17-7 lead. Miami star RB Willis McGahee was getting warmed up blowing past the tiring Buckeye front seven, but just as it looked like he'd take the game over, he suffered a blown out knee and was lost for the game. Miami couldn't seem to catch a break as Todd Sievers just missed a 54-yard field goal that would've tied things. However, Ohio State's offense couldn't find a way to run out the clock giving Dorsey had one last drive for a national title set up by a long punt

return by Roscoe Parrish. Dorsey got his Canes into position and Sievers came through putting the game into overtime with a 40-

yard field goal.

The ending: The Canes scored on a seven-yard touchdown pass to Kellen Winslow on their first overtime possession. Miami appeared to have the national championship won when Glenn Sharpe broke up a Krenzel pass in the end zone on fourth down, but he was nailed with a controversial pass interference call to keep the game alive. Krenzel punched it in for a onevard TD run to force a second overtime. Maurice Clarett scored on a five-yard touchdown run on OSU's possession in the second overtime for a 31-24 lead. On Miami's turn, Dorsey got his bell rung and had to come out on the biggest drive of the year. After a few time outs to try and clear the star quarterback's head, Dorsey was able to come back in and completed a perfect fourth down pass to Winslow to keep the season alive. With first and goal on the six, the Buckeyes got nailed with a pass interference call on Chris Gamble to give the Canes first and goal from the one. Jarrett Payton was stopped. Second and goal. Dorsey couldn't connect with a wide-open Eric Winston. Third and goal. Stopped. Fourth and the national title from the one. Ohio State got pressure on Dorsey forcing a prayer that went nowhere, and the Buckeyes had the national title.

How they ended up: Ohio State finished 14-0 and won the national title in both polls. Miami finished second.



MIAMI 31 **NEBRASKA 30** ORANGE BOWL **JANUARY 1, 1984**

At the time: Nebraska head coach Tom Osborne was trying to win his first national title with what was being called one of the greatest teams of all-time, outscoring its opponents by an average of 52 to 15.5. Miami lost its opening game 38-3 to Florida before winning its final ten games of the regular season to move up to No. 4. By the time the 50th Orange Bowl rolled around on New Year's night, No. 2 Texas was upset in the Cotton Bowl by Georgia while No. 3 Auburn squeaked by an average Michigan team 9-7 in the Sugar Bowl. Miami was now in the game for the national title. The setup: Miami took a shocking 10-0 lead led by freshman QB Bernie Kosar and his razor-sharp passing. He stayed hot leading the Canes to an improbable 17-0 lead completing 8 of 14 passes for 142 yards and two scores in the first quarter. The Husker offense finally got going with a slow and methodical drive until it faced a 3rd and five on the Miami 19. It was then that Osborne reached into his bag of tricks for the Fumblerooski. QB Turner Gill took the snap and ran down the right side of the offense looking to pitch the ball with the Hurricane defense following. But Gill intentionally dropped the ball and let it lie on the turf after the snap for the Outland and Lombardi Trophy winning Dean Steinkuhler who rumbled in for the shocking touchdown to put the Huskers back in the game. Miami was able to take a 31-17 lead late in the second half on an Albert Bentley touchdown run, but the game was far from over as the Huskers pulled to within seven with less than seven minutes to play on a Jeff Smith touchdown run. Miami answered by going on a long drive and was in a position to put the game away, but missed a field goal. Even with the setback, the Canes did a great job of taking time off the clock giving it back to the Huskers with 1:47 to play. The ending: Gill was having an average game overshadowed by Kosar's tremendous performance, but he wasn't getting much help as his all-everything receiver Irving Fryar was nowhere to be found. On first down on their own

26, Gill threw a strike to Fryar, who cut up the field and took it 29 yards before being brought down on a last gasp tackle. With 1:12 to play on the Miami 25, Gill threw another perfect pass, but a wide-open Fryar dropped it in the end zone before collapsing in a grief stricken moment. On the following play, Gill fumbled the ball after getting popped, but Steinkuhler picked it up and rumbled for positive yards making it 4th and eight on the Miami 29. Gill calmly ran the option to the right. At the last possible nanosecond, he pitched the ball to a streaking Smith who tore up the right sideline before diving into the end zone to pull the Huskers to within one point. Without hesitation, Osborne decided to go for two to try to win rather than go for the tie. Gill fired it outside to Smith, but it fell incomplete. On the ensuing onsides kick. Miami recovered preserving the 31-30 win. How they ended up: With no overtime, if Nebraska had kicked the extra point, it would've been doubtful if there was a voter in America that wouldn't have voted the Huskers the national champions after a tie. Instead, Miami finished No. 1. Nebraska No. 2.

MIAMI 26 **FLORIDA STATE 25 OCTOBER 3, 1987**

At the time: No. 3 Miami had beaten Florida and Arkansas to start the season by a combined score of 82 to 11. Florida State was ranked fourth with a 4-0 record averaging 39 points per game. Both teams were ridiculously talented loaded with several future NFL stars. The Hurricanes were led by boisterous wide receiver Michael Irvin and defensive back Bennie Blades going against the Seminole secondary with Leroy Butler, Martin Mayhew and Deion Sanders. The setup: A big Sanders punt return led to an FSU field goal to go up 19-3 as the Seminole defense held down OB Steve Walsh and the vaunted Hurricane attack. Even though the Noles were dominating, they couldn't convert their great drives into touchdowns and struggled with the kicking game. Walsh suddenly got hot finding Melvin Bratton for a 49-yard touchdown pass to take back some of the momentum, and

then made things interesting with a two-point conversion. Down 19-13 in the fourth quarter, Walsh hit Irvin on a 29-yard touchdown pass followed by a two-point conversion to tie the game at 19. FSU came down and missed a field goal, yes, wide right as the kicking game continued to struggle, but got the ball back and went on a late fourth quarter march on the running of Sammie Smith getting down to the Hurricane 10. Just when it looked like the Noles were going to pull it out, Smith fumbled with just over three minutes to play. A tie seemed almost certain.

The ending: After a few plays

got the Hurricanes to their own 27, Walsh and Irvin hooked up on what would be the play of the year. On 3rd and seven with 2:32 to play, Walsh audibled out of a short pass and floated a throw up the right sideline hitting Irvin in perfect stride for a 73 yard touchdown and a 26-19 lead. No, he wasn't being defended by Deion. FSU quarterback Danny McManus got the ball back needing to go 75 yards for a touchdown. After sputtering and stalling, with 1:30 to play the Noles went for it on 4th and eight from their own 27 as head coach Bobby Bowden feared his offense wouldn't get the ball back. They converted. Things got even better for the Noles as Dexter Carter made a remarkable 31-yard catch in double-coverage over Bennie Blades to get into scoring position. On the following play, Ronald Lewis one-upped Carter's grab on a diving catch in the back of the end zone while barely dragging his feet. Miami 26, FSU 25. Even though the Seminole kicking game had been miserable all day, Bobby Bowden didn't hesitate to send Derek Schmidt out for the tie. Bowden had said before the game that if it came down to it, he'd kick the extra point and take the tie instead of going for two. McManus and the other FSU players lobbied furiously with their head coach to go for two and the win. Bowden relented. McManus had Lewis wide open in the middle of the end zone, but didn't see him instead tossing an underthrown pass that was broken up in the right corner. Miami held the 26-25 lead before recovering the onside kick with :42 for the win

How they ended up: This turned out to be the game for the national title. Florida State ripped through the final six games of the regular season before beating Nebraska 31-28 in the Fiesta Bowl to finish 11-1 and ranked second in both polls. Miami allowed 89 points over its final nine games (and scored 304) on the way to a 12-0 season and the national title beating Oklahoma 20-14 in the Orange Bowl.

COLORADO 27 MICHIGAN 26 SEPTEMBER 24, 1994 At the time: No. 4

Colorado and its high-octane offense had stomped UL Monroe and Wisconsin by a combined score of 103 to 30 to start the season. No. 7 Michigan had squeaked by Boston College 34-26 and Notre Dame 26-24. The setup: A two-yard touchdown run by eventual Heisman winner Rashaan Salaam and a 27-yard touchdown pass from Kordell Stewart to Michael Westbrook gave the Buffs a 14-9 halftime lead. Michigan roared back with a 17-point third quarter highlighted by a 65yard touchdown pass to Amani Toomer for a 26-14 advantage. Colorado went on a long 72-yard march capped off with another short Salaam touchdown run to get within five with just over two

minutes to play. The ending: Colorado tried an onside kick with no luck, but Michigan failed to run out the clock hurt by a penalty making it 3rd and 7 rather than 3rd and two. Colorado's Chris Hudson signaled for a fair catch the Michigan punt on his own 15 with:14 to play. The Buffs were also out of timeouts. Stewart and Westbrook hooked up for a 21-yard gain, but there were now only eight ticks remaining and CU was only on its 36. A Stewart spike left six seconds left. The play call was "Rocket Left" with three receivers on the right running as far as they could. Stewart took the snap and rolled to his left back to around the 26, not pressured and able to wait for his receivers to make their way down the field. With no time left on the clock, he let it sail more than 70 yards arching down among a mass of players. Michigan's Ty Law and Chuck Winter went up with CU's Blake Anderson, but the ball bounced off of Anderson and into the air



by Law. Westbrook was behind the play and worked behind the mass to dive by Law and grab the deflected throw for a 64-yard touchdown and the 27-26 win. How they ended up: Michigan recovered to beat Iowa and Michigan State, but lost to Penn State on the way to an 8-4 season ending up with a 24-14 win over Colorado State in the Holiday Bowl and a No. 12 ranking. Colorado got out to a 7-0 start before losing to eventual national champion Nebraska 24-7. The Buffs finished third in both polls with an 11-1 record after beating Notre Dame 41-24 in the Fiesta Bowl.

GEORGIA 26 FLORIDA 21 NOVEMBER 8, 1980

At the time: Georgia, led by freshman sensation Herschel Walker, was 8-0 and ranked second in the nation coming off a tough 13-10 win over George Rogers and South Carolina. Florida was coming into the Cocktail Party ranked 20th with a 6-1 record only losing 24-7 to LSU. The setup: Walker kicked things off with a bang, tearing off a 72-yard touchdown run on the Dawgs' first drive. A 13yard touchdown pass from Buck Belue gave Georgia a 14-3 lead, but Florida was able to come back late in the first half on a nine-yard touchdown pass to Cris Collinsworth. It still looked like Georgia's day getting up 20-10 on two field goals, but once again, Florida fought back getting within two on a James Jones touchdown run and a twopoint conversion pass to Tyrone Young. The comeback seemed complete as Florida took a 21-20 lead on a 40-yard Brian Clark field goal late in the fourth quarter. Georgia's defense was able to keep the Gators from running out the clock, but there

was only 1:35 to play with the offense starting on its eight. The ending: Belue was having a horrible game. Walker was the Georgia offense rushing for 238 yards, while the Bulldog quarterback had only managed 52 passing yards with two interceptions. A sack and an incompletion made it 3rd and ten with 93 yards to go and just over a minute to play. Belue had to get a first down and was looking for Lindsay Scott, who earlier in the year had been booted off the team and had to get over a broken foot. Belue rolled out around his own goal line and found Scott in the middle of the field for the first down. Two Gator defenders appeared to have a bead on the tackle, but they fell allowing Scott to run free down the left sideline making his way for the improbable 93-yard touchdown. Florida's last gasp drive ended before it could start as Georgia's Mike Fisher made a game-sealing interception on the first play. How they ended up: Florida had a hard time recovering losing two of its final three games before beating Maryland 35-20 in the Tangerine Bowl to finish 8-4 and 19th in the UPI Poll. Georgia won its final three games ending with a 17-10 victory over Notre Dame in the Sugar Bowl and was national champion in both polls.

USC 34
NOTRE DAME 31
OCTOBER 15, 2005
At the time: Notre Dame
was in the middle of a resurgent
season under new head coach
Charlie Weis with a 4-1 record
winning on the road at Pitt,
Michigan, Washington and Purdue
and losing at home to Michigan
State. No. 1 USC was the defending
national champion coming into

South Bend on a 27-game winning

streak including three straight wins over Notre Dame by a combined score of 130 to 37. The setup: It was a dead even game from the start with neither team getting up by more than a touchdown. Down 28-24 with just under five minutes to play, Notre Dame marched 87 yards in eight plays with Brady Quinn completing four straight passes and Darius Walker running three times to get down to the five leading to a Quinn touchdown run with less than two minutes to play for a 31-28 lead.

The ending: USC's Reggie Bush took the ensuing kickoff to the Trojan 24. Following a sack of Matt Leinart, Bush caught a 12yard pass to make it fourth and nine with 1:32 to play. Leinart sized up the defense, audibled out of the play call, and threw, considering the circumstances, one of the most precise clutch passes in college football history connecting with Dwayne Jarrett for a quick strike that went 61 yards down to the Irish 13. A few Bush runs later made it first and goal from Notre Dame two, but time was quickly running out and USC didn't have any timeouts left. On first and goal, Leinart ran to the left, tried to dive into the end zone, and got popped well short of the goal line. Fans and players rushed the field thinking the game was over, but few saw the ball go flying out of bounds on the hit to stop the clock giving USC another life with seven seconds remaining. With USC coaches signaling to spike the ball to stop the clock, Leinart chose to try to sneak it in for what would be USC's final play no matter what the outcome. After twisting, turning, and getting a little help from behind on what would be known as the Bush Push, Leinart got into the end zone for the game-winning score with three seconds to play. Notre Dame wasn't able to do anything with the last gasp kickoff return.

How they ended up: USC would extend its winning streak to 34 games before losing the national championship to Texas 41-38 in one of the greatest games of all-time. Notre Dame won its final five games to get into the BCS where it lost to Ohio State 34-20. Had the Irish been able to hang on against USC, they likely would've ended up playing Texas in the Rose Bowl for the national championship.

BOSTON COLLEGE 47 MIAMI 45 NOVEMBER 23, 1984

At the time: The game had been moved to the Friday of Thanksgiving weekend to highlight defending national champion Miami vs. the eventual Heisman trophy winner Doug Flutie. Bernie Kosar and the Canes were 8-3 coming off a 42-40 loss to Maryland in the biggest choke/comeback in college football history blowing a 31-0 lead. Boston College was 7-2 with losses to West Virginia and Penn State.

The setup: The points were flying as Miami's Melvin Bratton scored four touchdowns including a 52-yard run in the fourth quarter and a one-yard run for a 45-41 lead with :30 to play. Kosar also put up big numbers with a 447-yard passing day with two touchdown passes in what appeared to be the game to end the Miami regular season on a high note. Flutie wasn't to be denied with a touchdown run and two touchdown passes including a nine-yard throw to Gerard Phelan. It was one of the most exciting games of all time with the Canes apparently coming out on top.

The ending: On his own 20, Flutie had one final drive starting off with a pass to Troy Stradford, who was able to get out of bounds at the Miami 48. An incompletion left six seconds on the clock and BC stuck with one last play. It was called 55 Flood Tip. Flutie scrambled to his right narrowly averting a sack, and then let it fly. He let it go from around his own 37yard line meaning the 5-9 QB had to wing the ball 63+ yards after already throwing it 45 times and scrambling around all game long. The Miami defensive backs didn't think Flutie could throw it to the end zone, so they didn't pay much attention to Phelan as he ran behind them. The ball came straight down over the mass of players untouched into Phelan's arms for the 47-45 Eagle win. The hard part was for Phelan to adjust to the ball not hitting anybody as he was waiting for it to be tipped. Phelan finished with 11 catches for 226 yards and two touchdowns while Flutie completed 34 of 46 passes for 476 yards, three touchdowns, one rushing touchdown, one miracle, and one Heisman Trophy.



How they ended up: BC beat Holy Cross before getting past Houston 45-28 in the Cotton Bowl to finish 10-2 and 4th in the UPI poll and 5th in the AP. Miami ended the season with a 39-37 loss to UCLA in the Fiesta Bowl to finish 8-5 and 18th in the AP poll.

BOISE STATE 43 OKLAHOMA 42 FIESTA BOWL JANUARY 1, 2007

At the time: 12-0 Boise State broke through the barrier and got a BCS bid, but almost no one thought it'd have much of a shot against Oklahoma, the Big 12 champion, despite being eighth in the BCS rankings, while OU was tenth. The Sooners had gone through adversity from the start of the year, from losing starting quarterback Rhett Bomar to suspension to losing to Oregon, helped by a controversial missed call, to losing star runner Adrian Peterson for a stretch with a broken collarbone. The Broncos had one nice win over Oregon State earlier in the year, but didn't get too much national respect after winning the WAC. The setup: Boise State had stunned the Sooners on the way to a 28-10 third quarter lead. While the Broncos had been sharp and productive, OU didn't help its cause with several mistakes and generally poor play. A Peterson touchdown run and a Garrett Hartley field goal cut the lead to eight early in the fourth, but the real fun didn't begin until Oklahoma's offense started to move with 2:14 to play. The ending: Oklahoma fought back to tie the game with a fivevard Quentin Chaney touchdown catch with 1:26 to play. After penalties forced a third twopoint conversion try, Sooner quarterback Paul Thompson found Juaquin Iglesias for

the tie. On the next play from scrimmage, Boise State's Jared Zabransky was picked off by Marcus Walker for a 33-yard interception return for a score and an improbably 35-28 OU lead. With under a minute to go, Boise State went 78 yards in five plays, converting on 4th and 18 for a 35-yard touchdown on a hook-and-lateral with Drisan James catching the ball and pitching it to Jerard Rabb, who took it for the score with seven seconds in regulation. In overtime, Peterson ran for a 25-yard score on OU's first play. Boise State, facing another big fourth down, ran a trick play for a touchdown on a five-yard touchdown pass from backup wide receiver Vinny Parretta to tight end Derek Schouman. Instead of forcing a second overtime, the Broncos went for the win, and got it, on a Statue of Liberty play, with Ian Johnson taking the ball around the left side for an untouched two-point conversion and the win.

How they ended up: Boise State finished the season fifth in the AP Poll and sixth in the Coaches' Poll, while Oklahoma ended up 11th in each. While only time will tell the true impact of the Broncos' win, it might have been a landmark victory for the "midmajor" programs when it comes to national respect.

CALIFORNIA 25 STANFORD 20 NOVEMBER 20, 1982

At the time: California was having a strong 6-4 year in head coach Joe Kapp's first season. Stanford and senior QB John Elway were 5-5 and needed to beat Cal to go to the Hall of Fame Bowl for the only bowl bid in the Elway era. It was an uneven season, but Stanford had beaten No. 1 Washington 43-31

for its fifth win to get in range for a post-season appearance. The setup: Stanford was on its way to a hard-fought, comeback 20-19 win after Cardinal kicker Mark Harmon hit a 35-yard field goal to seemingly put away its archrival. Elway, who had thrown for 330 yards with two touchdown passes, led the offense on an epic drive for Harmon's kick with just a few seconds remaining. The Stanford sideline went nuts running on the field and was nailed with a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. Who cares? All Stanford had to do was kick it off, make the tackle, and the game would be over.

The ending: Harmon, not wanting to give up a big return, squibbed his kickoff into the hands of Cal's Kevin Moen. About to be tackled, Moen tossed the ball to Richard Rodgers. Rodgers lateraled the ball to Dwight Garner. Garner was tackled, but desperately got the ball away back to Rodgers. The Bears were still around midfield. Rodgers then lateraled the ball to Mariet Ford. Yes, the play was still alive. Unfolding in front of the college football world was the embodiment of moments played out on sandlots and playgrounds as long as kids have played football, rugby, and Kill the Quarterback games. The band and the Stanford fans were on the field thinking the game was over, but Ford flung the ball wildly behind him into the hands of Moen, the man who started it all, who weaved and raced his way to the end zone dodging Stanford defenders and band members before crushing a trombone player after a triumphant leap. Did they really do it? After a huddle by officials for more than five minutes, they declared the impossible play a touchdown for the 25-20 Bear win.

How they ended up: Pac 10 officials reviewed the game tape a few days later and saw two problems. First, the Bears should've been flagged for an illegal formation on the kickoff. Second, Cal only had nine men on the field with the other two players running on after the kick was rolling. Even so, Stanford had players, and the band, on the field before the game ended and should've been flagged. Stanford finished 5-6 with Elway never getting to play in a bowl. Cal finished 7-4.

FOOTBALL BY CREG STEPHENSON

Proof Positive

Knight
used
power
of positive
thinking
to rebound

Zeke Knight has experience as pass-rusher.

University of Alabam

he Alabama football team had just suffered one of its most gut-wrenching losses of all time, a 24-23 overtime heartbreaker to Arkansas, but that wasn't what was bothering Zeke Knight on September 23, 2006.

Knight had just returned to his on-campus apartment after flying back from Fayetteville. Suddenly he was overcome with dizziness, slurred speech and numbness in one of his arms, scary symptoms for anyone, let alone a physically-fit, 21-year-old (then) college football player.

Knight reached for his cell phone and called teammate Darren Mustin, who drove him to the DCH Regional Medical Center emergency room. It would be nearly four months before Knight learned exactly what was wrong with him, but one thing quickly became clear-his 2006 season was over just four games in.

Fast-forward to now, and Knight is not only back on the field, but pre-season winner of the job at strongside linebacker, one of the outside spots in Bama's 3-4 base defense (the jack and strongside are outside, the middle and weakside linebackers are inside). Knight credits his reversal of fortune to the power of positive thinking, with a major assist from the team medical staff.

"That was very hard, very stressful," Knight said of his time away from football. "But I just thought positive the whole time.

"I got down a little bit, but I started thinking positive, like, if I couldn't play again, I could get my education. I started thinking like that."

The fall of 2006 was a long one for Knight, who had shown promise as a defensive end in the Crimson Tide's first four games. He moved to that position the previous spring after two years at wide receiver, where he combined for 21 receptions and one touchdown in 2004 and 2005.

While the Crimson Tide team was limping to a 6-7 finish, Knight was stuck on the sidelines. He said it never really crossed his mind that he might not ever play football again.

"Being an athlete, when you get hurt, that's the last thing you want to think about," Knight said. "I never told myself that. But they didn't know what was wrong with me.

"It was about four, five months before I found out what was really wrong with me. That was a long time."

Former Head Coach Mike Shula never disclosed the official diagnosis for Knight's illness, and current Coach Nick Saban has been reluctant to comment about most medical matters, particularly those that occurred before he arrived at The Capstone. Knight himself said that DCH doctors found a "spot" on a scan of his brain, but that he was unsure of the exact terminology.

Whatever the result was, it was eventually traced to a heart murmur, a relatively common malady in which the valves in the heart don't open and close properly during circulation. Most children outgrow such conditions. Knight didn't.

Shortly after Saban arrived at Alabama, Knight underwent surgery to correct his heart problem. It wasn't long before he was ready to play football again.

"Oh man, I was ready to go in, like, three days," Knight said. Team doctors agreed.



Knight passed all his post-surgical physical examinations with relative ease, and was back on the field at full speed when the Crimson Tide opened its first spring practice under Saban in March. He enjoyed a solid spring, earning the Lee Roy Jordan Headhunter Award on A-Day for his tackling ferocity during practice.

But that was after yet another position switch, albeit not as drastic as moving from wide receiver to defensive end. In the new 3-4 scheme installed by Saban and defensive coordinator Kevin Steele, Knight is now an outside linebacker, where he's better able to take advantage of his agility and often blinding speed.

"Zeke can run," Saban said. "He hasn't played standing up a lot, so his eye control and his ability to key and react to things is something-when guys haven't been stand-up players, their field of vision needs to be a little more focused, but also see more things and respond and react to more things. Coverage is obviously something that he hasn't had to do a lot of, but being a skill player in the past, I think he's very capable of being able to do those things.

"Hopefully, he'll continue to develop and improve."

Knight agrees that his years as a receiver will help him with the pass-coverage responsibilities at his new position.

"A couple of years ago, I was actually running the routes," Knight said. "Now, I'm covering the routes. And I think I'm kind of familiar with what the receivers are running (with) the way the line up, so that helps me."

At least so far, though, he's made an impression as a passrusher. Defensive end Bobby Greenwood said Knight was a regular presence in the offensive backfield during the early part of fall camp.

"He's looking good," Greenwood said. "I know he's pissing the quarterbacks off. He's doing good over there.

"That speed he's got-he's just got that knack for getting back there."

For his part, Knight was ready to make every practice-field acquaintance he could with the likes of Crimson Tide signal-callers John Parker Wilson, Greg McElroy and Nick Fanuzzi.

"Coaches tell us to go hard every play," Knight said. "I'm trying to get in their faces every chance I get."

Obviously, that mindset moves to opposing quarterbacks in the season.

One real positive for Knight is that he didn't lose last season. An appeal to the NCAA got him that year back as a medical redshirt season, so he is a junior in football eligibility.

Knight was an intriguing combination of size and speed at Randolph County High School, where he starred in football, basketball and track. His greatest gridiron exploits came in his senior year of 2003, when he led the Tigers to the Class 2A state championship.

Knight split times between wide receiver and linebacker, totaling 28 receptions, 522 yards and seven touchdowns on offense and 106 tackles and two sacks on defense. He also excelled on special teams with six punt returns for touchdowns, including one in the Tigers' state championship victory over Luverne.

Though he was named Class 2A Back of the Year by the Alabama Sports Writers Association, many envisioned Knight

as a defensive standout in college. Recruiting analysts often compared the 6-4, 220-pound specimen to former Auburn star Karlos Dansby, now a member of the NFL's Arizona Cardinals.

Knight had his heart set on offense, though, and chose Alabama over Auburn largely because Shula and his staff promised him a chance to begin his career at wide receiver.

At least in the short term, his decision paid off, as he earned playing time as a true freshman in 2004. He stayed in the receiver rotation his first two years at Alabama, though fellow 2004 freshmen Keith Brown and D.J. Hall quickly seized starting positions and relegated Knight to a back-up role.

Though Alabama enjoyed one of its best seasons in recent memory in 2005, going 10-3 and winning the Cotton Bowl, the year was a tough one on the field for Knight, who saw his playing time decline steadily after a rash of dropped passes early in the season. Before the following spring, he met with Shula and the two agreed that Knight would move to defense.

"It's nothing different. I was used to hitting, just like I was used to catching the football. (Switching) was nothing."

He stepped in at right defensive end, and quickly emerged as the top back-up to starter Keith Saunders. In his first game on defense, Knight recorded a sack and forced a fumble in the Crimson Tide's 25-17 win over Hawaii.

Knight played extensively in the next three games, until his sudden illness following the Arkansas game. With a clean bill of health since his surgery in February, Knight has been concentrating on picking up the nuances of the Crimson Tide's new defense.

"It's going pretty good right now," Knight said. "I'm just trying to get the defense down pat. It's a little bit different from offense. I get to hit people now. That's different, but not a lot else."

There are subtle differences between defensive end and outside linebacker, the biggest being that he began each play at end with his hand on the ground and saw almost immediate contact with an opposing offensive lineman. Conversely, the strongside linebacker in Alabama's scheme is a stand-up position that requires players to work a lot in space and follow the ball.

But that's all trivial as far as Knight is concerned.

"Standing up, down in the stance, it's all the same to me," Knight said. "I'm just going to play hard."

It's been a long journey for Knight in his Alabama career, with three position coaches and two head coaches in less than four years. He nearly saw the end of his college career due to injury, but the Pride of Randolph County has proven resilient enough to emerge as one of the most talked-about Crimson Tide players as he heads into the heart of the 2007 season.

Wedowee has long been largely an Auburn town (it's less than an hour's drive from The Plains, and parts of Randolph County are even closer), but Knight has at least seen to it that loyalties in his home territory are split between the Tigers and Crimson Tide. He often talks to his high school friends and coaches, most of whom feel that Knight is finally playing the right position four years into his college career.

"They tell me'I knew you were going to wind up at linebacker. You should have gone there to begin with," Knight said.

"They're right. I think I'm at home now."

The Real McCoy

Soph wide receiver wants to make up for lost year



University of Alabama

aybe, just maybe, an unlikely event is playing a role in helping propel Mike McCoy to a new level. The sophomore wide receiver has been getting rave reviews from his teammates for his improvement since last year.

Remember 2006 pre-game warm-ups in Knoxville? McCoy

"We were doing a pass drill and I caught a pass going to the sidelines," he said. "The next thing I knew that dog had caught me on the back of the leg."

Tennessee's mascot hound bit McCoy, breaking the skin. "I'll

remember that when we play Tennessee this year."

That wasn't McCoy's first experience with a dog bite. "When I was a kid I used to have to run by dogs on the way to school and back," he said. "I think that made me faster."

Almost everyone, including McCoy, points to his speed being better since last fall. But it probably isn't reinforcement from dog phobia.

"I've dropped 25 pounds," McCoy said. "I was 219 when I came to Alabama. Now I'm between 190 and 195, depending on when I weigh."



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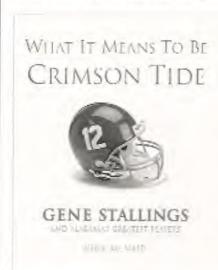




WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE

GENE STALLINGS AND ALABAMA'S GREATEST PLAYERS

Alabama football means championships and All-Americans and, for many, memories of a man in a houndstooth hat. Some 60 former Alabama players who per-



formed in Crimson and White over a 75-year period tell us What IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE, and many remember Paul "Bear" Bryant. His time as a Bama player, assistant coach, and 25 years as head coach is a major part of Alabama football, but not the only great era. There have also been national championships won under Wallace Wade and Frank Thomas and Gene Stallings. And part of What IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE is former Alabama players' expectations of more national titles.

The last coach to lead Alabama to the national championship is Gene Stallings, who played and coached for Coach Bryant before becoming a Hall

of Fame caliber coach himself.

Not only have the coaches been legendary but that stellar tradition has spawned players enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame and the NFL's Pro Football Hall of Fame. Now, Gene Stallings and 'BAMA Editor Kirk McNair have collaborated to bring together many of the greatest players ever to wear the Crimson and White to share their memories in What it Means to be Crimson Tide-Gene Stallings and Alabama's greatest players.

Among those sharing their memories are: from the '40s and '50s, Harry Gilmer and Bart Starr; from the '60s and '70s, Lee Roy Jordan, Joe Namath, Ray Perkins, Ken Stabler, Johnny Musso, John Hannah, and Ozzie Newsome; from the '80s and '90s, Mike Shula and Jay Barker. And many more, including those from the new millennium.

Gene Stallings reveals much of his philosophy and also tells the story of how he did *not* become Alabama's head football coach in 1983. Kirk McNair introduces the players.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CRIMSON TIDE-GENE STALLINGS AND ALABAMA'S GREATEST PLAYERS is now available. The hardcover book is more than 300 pages in an oversized format with archival photographs throughout. To order your copy (\$27.95 plus tax, shipping and handling) call 1-205-345-5074. You may request a personalized autograph from Kirk McNair.

Simeon Castille is an All-America candidate at cornerback, one of the Crimson Tide players who has worked against McCoy. At this summer's Southeastern Conference Media Days event, Castille spoke of McCoy.

"It's awesome to see a player work hard and see him reap the benefits of it," Castille said. "He is transformed. His body has changed. And he has gotten faster. When we ran forties (40-yard dashes) he was running 4.4 (second)s. He's been tearing it up in the conditioning. He's just working his tail off."

And he's not just in good shape, Castille said. McCoy has been performing well.

Castille isn't the only Tider to notice the improvement in McCoy. Antoine Caldwell, an all-star center for the Tide, talked about summer work. He said McCoy was "the number one player by far" in terms of younger players who might surprise Alabama fans this fall.

Caldwell said that another all-star candidate, wide receiver D.J. Hall, "has even been, like, 'Man, this guy's just turned into a monster.' It's like a switch just came on for him. He's always been an incredible athlete. He's turned into a completely different person and player. I can't say enough for what he's done."

Quarterback John Parker Wilson joins in the praise. "He is really impressive," Wilson said. "I think he has gotten a lot faster because he slimmed down a little bit. He knows what he is doing and he knows what to expect. He is getting open and he is going up and getting balls. He has really impressed me."

Marquis Johnson, a Bama defensive back, said McCoy "has gotten a lot faster. When he first came here he didn't know how to break off coverage. He did this arm-swing thing that we made fun of. Now he's a big guy (McCoy is 6-3) who plays like a short, fast guy. That's a plus. He's always had good hands. He runs great routes and he is physical."

Another Tide defensive back, Lionel Mitchell, joined in the praise. "He is a lot quicker this year," Mitchell said. "He moves off the ball better. He's more explosive. He has matured. He's always been able to catch the ball."

Matt Caddell, a senior wide receiver, works with McCoy and the other young split ends and flankers. "They are all fast learners," Caddell said. "Mike has really gotten better. He's going to be in the (playing) rotation. The key is learning the offense. Once he knows the assignments, the rest comes easy for him."

McCoy said he looks up to the seniors, Hall, Caddell and Keith Brown. "We talk to each other about what we need to do, and I watch them in practice, watch things like their hips," McCoy said.

Those players are part of the reason McCoy selected Alabama. "I could have gone to Mississippi State or Auburn or Southern Miss and maybe played earlier," he said. "But I wanted to come to Alabama and be around those great receivers and learn from them."

Mike McCoy wasn't telling any "How hot is it?" jokes. But as Alabama went through fall camp in temperatures over 100 degrees, he said, "It might be hotter than Mississippi." He should know, hailing from Rankin, Mississippi.

McCoy was an all-state player on one of the nation's best high school teams. Northwest Rankin was ranked 16th in the nation his senior year and the team won two division championships. His team went 22-3 his junior and senior seasons. As a senior he caught 42 passes for 821 yards and seven touchdowns.

But, McCoy said, "I didn't get a ring in high school. I want one here."

When Mike Shula was an Alabama football freshman in 1983, he had a year of eligibility thrown away as he was used for just a handful of plays. Shula didn't learn much from that experience, it seemed.

Last year McCoy lost a year of eligibility because he participated in a total of eight plays in three games. He was used for two plays in the season-opener against Hawaii and five plays in the late-season rout of Florida International. It was somehow fitting that in the game in which he was snapped-Tennessee-he also got to play one snap.

It had been a surprise to see McCoy in the season-opener. Afterwards, Shula said he played McCoy because he expected him to be in the playing rotation.

"I practiced with the first and second team every day, but

then never got into the games," McCoy said. "I didn't question it. I just had to be patient. It was a great experience as a freshman to go to places like Tennessee and Arkansas."

But he did think he should have been playing, "Every receiver and every football player thinks he can do the job better than anyone else," McCoy said. "That's why we're at Alabama."

Still, he doesn't worry about the lost year. "I believe everything happens for a reason," he said. "One thing it means is that I have to work harder in the classroom, keep my grades up, because now I need to finish in four years."

Like all players, McCoy hopes there is a professional football opportunity at the end of his college career. But if not, he's preparing for a career in business.

McCoy said Tide players have adjusted well to the coaching change. "I think maybe everyone is working harder to catch the attention of the new coaches," he said.

"The coaches really know what we're doing," he said.

"Coach Saban knows what it takes to win. All of our coaches have been in successful situations."

He said that Saban's work with the secondary has also helped him. "I listen to him when he's talking to the cornerbacks to try to figure out what I should be doing against it," he said.

McCoy thinks the role of receivers will be more important in the offense under Saban. "We have a lot of different schemes," he said. "But one of the most important things is the receivers have to make every play look like a pass."

McCoy said as he goes into his sophomore season, "My confidence is up, my hands are better, and especially I think I've improved my speed."

As for where he needs to improve? "Everything, everyday," he said. "I can be a better route-runner. You can never be content. You have to come out and compete every day. You're not going to stay the same. You are either going to get better or you are going to get worse."

The sophomore thinks Alabama has helped its wide receiver corps with freshmen Brandon Gibson, Marquis Maze, and Darius Hanks.

McCoy knew he was a good football player when he was young. (He's also a good basketball player and thinks that if he wasn't playing college football he would be playing college basketball.)

"I had always been good in Pee Wee football," he said. "You don't think much about playing beyond that when you're that young. Then my mother was diagnosed with cancer. I promised her then she wouldn't have to worry about paying for my college education, that I would get a football scholarship.

"She has been in remission for about seven years, but I'm glad I kept that promise."

It looks like that will be beneficial to Alabama football, too.

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Going Outlin

Simeon Castille has high hopes for senior year

I f you're Nick Saban and Kevin Steele, it pays to have a guy like Simeon Castille patrolling your secondary. Both the Alabama head coach and defensive coordinator are well aware that they will field a paper-thin front seven on defense. One doesn't have to be a football Einstein to realize that means that, at least occasionally, safeties Marcus Carter and Rashad Johnson will have to cheat up to help against the run.

"We're going to have a lot of things that we can do," Carter said. "We're just scratching the tip of the iceberg, with all the different disguises, coverages and schemes that we have, so I'm excited. I'm excited to learn some new calls, and new defenses." As a junior, Castille led the Tide with six interceptions and three fumble recoveries.

"In Coach Saban's defense, as safeties, we play up on the run a lot," smiled Marcus Carter, a senior returning starter. "With Simeon back there, it's always a good thing. He's a good player, and he had a real good year last year. I don't expect anything but for him to have a better year this year.".

While understandably hesitant to reveal specific schemes, Steele knows he's got a weapon in the senior Castille. "Obviously, Simeon is a focused young man who is giving tremendous effort. To get into the process of how we're going to cheat here and play there, it's a little bit early in the process for that," Steele said a few days into fall camp. Steele said

Castille was one of several "older guys, who by nature, we're trying to develop leadership (from)."

Since taking over as head coach in January, Saban has seen a change in Castille. "Simeon Castille has been an outstanding player at The University of Alabama," Saban said. "He had a great spring for us. I think the biggest difference in what I see in him (is) he's accepted the role of leader, and trying to affect other people. I see him constantly trying to give instruction, set an example for, helping other guys do their job. We certainly appreciate that. That's something we need."

Though the roster lists them a year apart, junior All-SEC center Antoine Caldwell signed in the same class with Simeon out of high school in 2004. Caldwell had to sit out his true freshman year with an injury. "Incredible athlete," Caldwell said of his teammate. "Incredible guy. Simeon and I spend a lot of time together, on and off the field. He's one of the best people I've been around since I've been here. I'm expecting to be a leader like he's been for the last two years at Alabama. I'm expecting him to make big plays. I can't say enough about the kind of guy, the kind of athlete he is, and the kind of guy his father is. Jeremiah does a great job with us as our team chaplain. Those are just two great people that I don't think anybody should miss out on meeting."

Saban basically serves as Castille's position coach while secondary coach Kirby Smart oversees the safeties. The first-year Tide head coach joked in the spring that he was "Kirby's GA (Graduate Assistant)." Castille says that hasn't changed this summer and fall. "Every time I turn around, he's there," Castille grinned. "Every time I mess up, or one of our other cornerbacks messes up, he's there to correct us and tell us what we did wrong."

One reporter asked Castille about how much time Saban spends with the cornerbacks during a typical twohour Tide practice.

"About two hours," Castille answered.

He continued, "It seems like everywhere we are, he is. It keeps you on your feet, knowing that he's watching. He's helped me concentrate on the little things. I've been playing defensive back a long, time, and it's just amazing how much he taught me in that one spring.

"At first, it was really about just trying to learn what to do, but now that we are more familiar with the (defensive) calls, it's the little things within the calls that he's trying to get us to focus on, like being at ten yards when you have a specific drop. Going through your progressions. Reading the (quarterback's) three-step drop, and then getting your eyes back on your receiver. Just little things that you really wouldn't, think about . We really couldn't concentrate on them in the spring, because we were trying to learn so much stuff.

"It's really just about coming out here every day and working, just trying to get better. I think that Coach Saban does a good job of keeping us grounded," said the second son of former Tide All-America and NFL cornerback Jeremiah Castille. "Just concentrating on all the little things that (Saban) stresses doing right, it takes up all the space in your mind, (instead) of thinking about, 'We have to beat this team or that team,' or 'We have to win this many games.' You just try to take it one day at a time. It's been awesome. (Saban) has a whole lot of knowledge. I'm just trying to soak it all up to be the best player that I can be. I just think it's awesome how he interacts with not only the cornerbacks, but the secondary as a whole, (and) the defense as a whole. He 's a defensive-minded guy, and I like that about him."

While Simeon Castille heads up the Tide's interception record chart, D.J. Hall is doing the same to the receiving records. Most Tide practices are closed, but one can imagine some of the battles the two must have in practice. "You've seen him play," Hall said matter-of-factly. "He's great, man. That's how we get better, overall. I work him, and he works me, and when the game comes, it's kind of, I'm not going to say easy, but it's not as hard as practice, because we go at each other every day. We kind of know each other like the back of our hands, now, because we've been going against each other for so long. We don't take it lightly on each other. We go out and try to win. I know he doesn't want me to beat him, and I definitely don't want him to beat me."

Simeon Castille had a good idea of what he was getting into when decided to don the crimson jersey. "At Alabama, everybody has high expectations, Castille said. "I,ve been around Alabama football my entire life. I know what the fans expect." What he didn't know about was the off-season "fourth quarter program" of Saban and new Strength and Conditioning Coach Scott Cochran. The mixture of runs, drills and lifts that has the 6-1, 193-pounder in the best shape of his life. "You didn't have a choice," Castille said. "Either you were going to finish or you were going to finish, because they weren't going to let you quit. One thing they were trying to get us to learn was that we were going to have to outwork our opponent. That's what they tried to simulate during all of our training. It definitely took us being mentally tough to go out there and run those 26 110's (yard dashes) when it's ninety-something degrees outside, or finish the (lifting) workout and then go run. I definitely think it's going to pay off for us."

Simeon Castille followed in the footsteps of his dad and brother (former Tide fullback Tim) when he inked with Mike Shula nearly four years ago. Tim is trying out with the Arizona Cardinals, while younger brother Caleb will be a sophomore starter at wide receiver for Birmingham's Briarwood Christian School. "I've appreciated all three of them, and they've all been great kids to work with" said Lions Coach Fred Yancey. "You can tell they've been brought up right."

You can credit that to Jean Castille and her husband, Jeremiah, who knows what it takes to be an effective

cornerback both in the SEC and at the next level. "From the freshman year on, he has grown as a player, learning how to play the game, and developing the discipline to play the game to where he's become consistent" said the elder Castille. "If you're going to make plays, you have to be consistent in your play. I think the first couple of years he played (at Alabama), you'd see a great play here and there, but really great players are consistent, game in and game out, practice in and practice out. I think that's probably where he's grown and matured the most."

One question posed to Jeremiah Castille was how his game as a senior defensive back under Paul "Bear" Bryant compares to that of his son as a senior playing for Saban. Jeremiah doesn't want to take anything away from the position coach he had, Bill Oliver, but Jeremiah points to having a head coach who is a cornerback specialist as being a big advantage.

"Simeon has more physical tools than I had," Jeremiah added. "I didn't have a 6-1 height. I was 5-9. What I believe he has to continue to develop is a hunger and a desire to be great at it. I think that came from me, because of the head coach (Bryant) that I had."

Before going into first the Bama Fellowship of Christian Athletes job and now his own ministry, Jeremiah served as Simeon's position coach at Briarwood, under Yancey. "Coach Yancey did a great job as a high school coach of recognizing (Simeon's) talents, and allowing him to develop those talents," Jeremiah said, "and to create a winning environment. Simeon came to The University of Alabama as a state champion in high school football." The Lions captured the 2003 Alabama 5A title, and have not been back to the championship game since Simeon left the program.

As much influence as Yancey had, Simeon points to his dad as the one who set the standard. "He's had the most influence on me, not only in football, but in my life, period," Simeon said. "Everybody looks at him as being one of the best to ever play at Alabama, and he was that. I just couldn't imagine being 5-9, 160-pounds playing cornerback in the SEC. and have the kind of success that he had. He was a great one. I'm trying to leave on the note that he did, so to speak."

What are Simeon's long term goals, post-Tuscaloosa? "We talked about that (recently," Jeremiah said. "He said, 'Dad, I want to be the best defensive back there is, in the country,' and I said, 'If that's going to happen, then you're going to have to have a game plan. You're going to have to have a coach on the field and off the field.' His desire is that he be the best in college, and then take it to the next level. To me, that's what you want to do. That should be his goal."

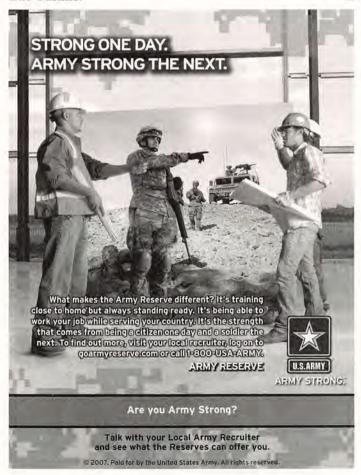
Goals are a big part of Simeon's life. One is to snap the Tide's current five-game losing skid against rival Auburn. He said, "We definitely need that win, big-time, to get the tables turned and get the series back on our side. It being my senior year, it's going to be more emphasis on that game for mebecause I haven't beaten Auburn. This is my last chance, and I

definitely want to achieve that."

The Thorpe Award candidate has another goal, too, and it concerns dear old dad. "The only thing I want to get that he has is, he finished his career (at Alabama) with 16 interceptions. If I get seven this year, Ill have 17. so hopefully, Ill get it." Jeremiah's 16 picks are second all-time at UA behind the 19 thefts by Antonio Langham (1990-93).

Though he was part of a 10-win team in his sophomore season of 2005, Simeon Castille enters his final season at The Capstone with higher hopes, and admits some of those were generated with the hiring of Saban in January. "I definitely think we're going to be competitive (in the SEC) this year," he said. "A lot of people are asking, 'How is coach Saban going to do his first year?' I don't look at it like that. It may be his first year, but I look at it as my last year. I want to go out having the best season that's possible. I definitely think that we're going to be able to make some noise in the SEC West. I expect to win, and that's what I want to do. I am being realistic; we have a chance to win every game. We may not go undefeated, but I definitely want to have a great senior season, one that I can look back on and be proud of."

Coming from a man whose father lettered as a freshman on the Tide's 1979 national title team, that's spoken like a true Castille.



Going And Coming

Williams retires as top assistant to athletics director



University of Alabama

It was something of a surprise when it was announced that Johnny Williams is retiring. He had served since 2004 as The University of Alabama's senior associate athletics director for external operations.

It is human nature to try to read between the lines. When Williams was hired as Athletics Director Mal Moore's senior associate in 2004, the immediate conclusion was that Williams had been brought in to succeed Moore.

And when it was announced that Williams would be leaving the department, there was speculation that he had been forced out by Crimson Tide Football Coach Nick Saban.

Neither was true.

Although Moore would seem to have earned the right to choose his successor, at best he will be able to make a recommendation to the president and board of trustees. And there is no sign that Moore intends to give up his post any time

soon. He's healthy and he enjoys what he is doing. Moreover, Moore has more things he wants to accomplish as director of athletics, notably in the area of scholarship funding.

Asked about Williams, Saban said they had a good relationship, although Williams' area of responsibility was not in football.

The simple explanation is that Williams had an outside offer that was too good to pass up. Williams, who joined the department after serving as athletics director at Troy University for 11 years, is eligible for retirement. But he's not going to stop working.

He has been named chief executive officer and chairman of the board of Creative Marketing and Management (CMM) in Tuscaloosa. CMM is a new company that will specialize in marketing and management rights of performing artists in the entertainment industry and athletics.

"I'll still be around," Williams promised.

Moore said, "Johnny brought good vision and creative thinking to our athletics department and I am confident that he will be very successful in this new venture. He's a very innovative person who made a difference with everything he was associated with in our department. I will always be appreciative of the step Johnny took to come here as an associate athletics director after being athletics director at Troy. I wish him nothing but the best."

Williams said, "Having coached on a football staff at Troy that won the 1987 national championship and having the experience as an administrator of moving a program up from Division II to Division I-A, and everything I was able to be a part of here at Alabama, I feel like I've had a rich experience in college athletics. This new venture will give me the ability to build something that my two sons (Andrew, 23, and David, 18) can be a part of."

Williams' responsibilities at Alabama included oversight of Tide Pride, marketing and promotions, and the ticket office. Under Williams' watch at Troy, the athletics department moved to Division I-A from Division II.

Williams began his athletics career at Troy as a graduate assistant football coach under Rick Rhoades. During his coaching tenure with the Trojans, Williams also held several administrative positions within the department. In 1986 and 1987, he coordinated the football program's marketing and development efforts as a special assistant to the athletics director, in addition to his coaching duties. In 1988, he coordinated travel and ticket sales.

Prior to his arrival in Troy, Williams was head football coach and athletics director at Pickens County High School in Reform. He also served as an assistant coach at his alma

mater, the University of North Alabama, from 1979-83. The Holt native is a 1980 graduate of UNA, Williams was a four-year defensive starter for the Lions, earning Defensive Lineman of the Year honors in 1978. He was selected to the UNA Team of the Decade for the 1970s.

There have been other staff changes in the athletics department.

Scott Limbaugh, who has been the head golf coach at Huntingdon College for the past three seasons and led Huntingdon to a school-best fourth-place national finish this past season, has been named Bama assistant men's golf coach.

Limbaugh was selected for the post by Head Coach Jay Seawell for Limbaugh's "wealth of both coaching and playing experience."

Limbaugh, 27, replaces Georgia native Christian Newton who left Alabama to become assistant golf coach at Georgia Tech.

"My goal has always been to coach at a Division I school that desires to win national championships with integrity," said Limbaugh, a native of Childersburg. "There is no doubt in my mind that both of these objectives will be achieved under Coach Seawell at The University of Alabama. This is an opportunity to coach at a great university under a great coach, and it is truly an exciting time to be part of the golf program at The University of Alabama. Huntingdon College will always have a very special place in my heart since I was a graduate, then an assistant coach, then the head coach for the past three seasons."

Limbaugh, the 2005-06 Eaton/Golf Pride South Region NCAA Division III Coach of the Year, coached Huntingdon to a fourth-place NCAA Division III men's golf finish in 2007,

its best finish in school history. It was Huntingdon's third straight NCAA appearance as Limbaugh's teams qualified all three seasons he was head coach. in 2005, 2006 and 2007. His first Huntingdon team in 2005 finished ninth and the 2006 team finished 15th. The 2006 team was ranked number one in the nation for a time in Division III during the 2005-06 season. He also produced an All-America in Fairhope's Jacob Collinsworth who finished second individually at the NCAA Division III Championships. Collinsworth is one of three All-Americas Limbaugh produced at Huntingdon.

Limbaugh played for the Hawks for two seasons after helping lead Central Alabama Community College to two JUCO national championships in 1999 and 2000. Limbaugh was a co-captain of the 2000 team. As a golfer at Huntingdon, he competed at nationals in 2002 and was team captain in 2002. He is a 2003 graduate of Huntingdon College and was hired as Huntingdon's assistant golf coach upon graduation. He was elevated to head coach in June 2004.

Women's track and field has added Scott Roberts as an assistant coach. Head Coach Sandy Fowler said his emphasis will be on the Tide's sprint and jump events.

"Scott has a great knowledge of the sprints, jumps, and multi events." Fowler said.

Roberts comes to The Capstone from Iowa State where he spent the previous 11 seasons and was considered one of the leading sprint and hurdle authorities in the Midwest. Before joining the Iowa State staff he had also coached at Drake, Ohio State and Northeast Missouri State.

In his 11 seasons at Iowa State his athletes rewrote the school's record books, setting 52 school records, more than 500 personal records and qualified for the NCAA Championship meet 42 times.

Roberts is a certified strength and conditioning specialist, a USATF coaching education instructor, and levels I and II certified coach in the sprints, hurdles, relays and jumps. He is also the author of two new books: Progressions for Coaching the Sprints and Progressions for Coaching the Hurdles.

A native of Muscatine, Iowa, he graduated from Midland Lutheran University (Fremont, Nebraska) in 1991 with a degree in education concentrations on social science and coaching. While at Midland he was a standout sprinter qualifying three times for the NAIA track and field championships and setting eight school records.



What's In A Name

Bridget and Brigitte are keys to Tide Success



hen Bridget Fuentez was born on Feb. 10, 1986, the name Bridget was the 173rd most popular baby name for girls in the United States, according to the Social Security Administration.

The rarity of the name, then, might explain the shock and confusion felt by another Brigitte - Brigitte Slack - when Slack was being recruited to play volleyball at the University of Alabama.

"It was really awkward when I was talking to coach Green being recruited, she would keep saying my name and keep saying 'Brigitte' and I was always thinking, 'Why are you saying my name in third person?'," Slack said. "Then I realized, oh, there's another Bridget on the team."

Today, Fuentez and Slack are two of the four seniors on the Alabama roster, and while the two may share first names, the roommates and best friends say that's about where the similarities end.

"I think we're pretty different," Fuentez said. "I would say we're different in a lot of ways, but it's good. It's what makes us good friends. The type of music we like is totally different



On the court, the pair couldn't be much different either. Fuentez, an outside hitter, was second on the team last season in kills. Slack, a setter, led the team by far in sets and set attempts.

but we can both put up with

each other."

"[Fuentez's] role is probably a lot more noticeable than mine because of her position and personality with kills and celebration dances, getting the team pumped and the team feeds off of that," Slack said. "My personality is a lot more reserved and relaxed when it comes to games. I'm more in the background. My role fits my personality in that you don't really notice it and it's not that dramatic."

Still, Fuentez said, as different as the two may be, they do share one important similarity: their goals for the season.

"That's one thing we do have in common," she said. "This year, our senior year, the obvious goal is to get past the first round of NCAA's. It's what we've hit up against the last two years and we haven't been able to break that wall yet, and our senior year that's definitely one of our overall goals."

University of Alaban

Prep Prospects

Julio Jones heads skill position players in Alabama

ne of the factors of recruiting is need. If a team needs linebackers and there is a linebacker available and a running back available, naturally the recruiters are going to concentrate on the linebacker.

Sometimes, though, conventional wisdom is out the window. Every team is in search of the super great prospect, regardless of position.

Thus, even teams loaded with wide receivers are trekking to Foley, Alabama, in an attempt to woo Julio Jones.

Julio Jones would be a top prospect for the Alabama Crimson Tide regardless of need. With the Bama offense of Coach Nick Saban expected to utilize a number of wide receivers, coupled with the impending graduations of D.J. Hall, Keith Brown and Matt Caddell, the situation is obvious.

Alabama has Julio Jones as Priority Number One.

Number One is a familiar feeling for Jones, who is the number one prospect in the state of Alabama and the number one wide receiver prospect in the nation.

Here's a look at Julio Jones and other skill position prospects in the state of Alabama. It's an excellent year for prospects at a number of positions in the state. Skill position players include quarterback, running back, wide receiver, cornerback and safety. This listing is by position.

High school seniors are making non-binding commitments, but nothing is official until scholarships are signed in February.

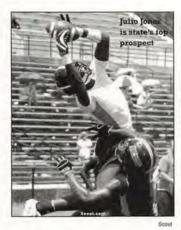
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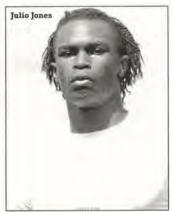
Julio Jones of Foley is a 6-4, 212-pound superstar. He is the state's top prospect and the number one ranked receiver in the country by Scout.com. The hype surrounding Jones is comparable to Andre Smith's recruitment coming out of high school two years ago. Smith, who is the Tide's starting left tackle, was ranked by Scout.com as the number one offensive lineman in the country. That evaluation has been validated by early results.

Jones displays incredible athleticism, catching ability, and is dangerous with the ball in his hands with great size, power and speed. Jones has scholarship offers from coast-to-coast, but Alabama, Florida, Florida State, LSU, and Miami appear as the teams strongest in the mix for his signature.

He plans to announce his college decision on National Signing Day in February, which reminds of the dramatic announcement by Andre Smith for Alabama two years ago.

Alabama landed the commitment of Burton (B.J.) Scott (5-11,





190), a Scout.com four-star receiver from Vigor High School in Prichard. Scott's decision came as a surprise with the Florida Gators having been considered the leader for Scott most of the spring and summer.

Scott is a gifted athlete who plays numerous positions, lining up at quarterback, running back, receiver, defensive back and playing on special teams. He rushed for 1,070 yards with 11 touchdowns, had 1,059 passing yards with eight touchdowns, and turned in eight catches for 353 yards and one touchdown. He accounted for 2,701 yards and 21 touchdowns.

He was recruited by Alabama to line up as a receiver. Scott plans to take official visits to Auburn and Florida, but he is recruiting other top prospects to join him at The Capstone.

Mark Barron (6-2, 205), a Scout.com four-star receiver at St. Paul's in Mobile, is an explosive prospect who could play several positions for Alabama. He is being recruited as an athlete. He lines up as a receiver, running back and linebacker for his high school team.

He recorded 78 carries for 785 yards and 23 receptions for 368 yards during his junior season. He accounted for 12 touchdowns.

He has received scholarship offers from the likes of Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Georgia LSU, and Miami. His teammate, Ivan Matchett an Alabama commitment, is actively recruiting Barron to join him in Tuscaloosa.

Destin Hood (6-2, 185) is another of the fine prospects at St. Paul's in Mobile. He stars in both football and baseball. Hood spent most of his summer at various baseball events and

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could go high in the draft or decide to play two sports on the next level.

He committed to Alabama in early August over Auburn, Florida, LSU, Florida State and Clemson. Coach Saban does not have a problem with him playing both sports in Tuscaloosa with Bama Baseball Coach Jim Wells recruiting Hood as a shortstop.

Dekendrick Moncrief (6-0, 175) of Prattville is a Scout. com three-star receiver and a dynamic prospect. He caught 51 passes for 1,001 yards and 18 touchdowns during his junior season.

Moncrief has received scholarship offers from Auburn, Iowa State, Southern Miss, UAB, Ole Miss and Ball State. He lists favorites as Auburn and Florida.

Brad Smelley is a 6-3, 215-pound quarterback at American Christian Academy in Tuscaloosa. If that rings a bell it's because his brother, Chris, was in the same spot a couple of years ago. Chris opted for a scholarship offer from South Carolina.

Brad gave his commitment to Alabama in the spring and projects at the H-back position.

As a junior Smelley completed 183 passes for 2,611 yards and 24 touchdowns.

Marsellos Wilder (6-3, 190) of Tuscaloosa Central has increased his stock with outstanding summer camp performances including a sensational display of talent at the ScoutSouth.com combine in May.

He received scholarship offers from Mississippi State and UAB. Wilder recorded 39 receptions for 640 yards and 10 touchdowns during his junior season.

Other upcoming senior wide receivers in Alabama high school ranks to keep an eye on include: Emmanuel Davis of Prattville, Brandon Harris of Hoover, Quinton Pierce of Mobile Davidson, and Tae Keith of Talladega.

OUARTERBACK

Historically, Alabama and other top college teams have recruited a number of high school quarterbacks, but frequently those men are outstanding athletes who are expected to play other skill positions in college.

Here are some being looked at specifically to play quarterback in college.

It has been described as the best year of recruiting in the state of Alabama.

The top in-state quarterback is Barrett Trotter, 6-1, 192, of Briarwood Christian in Birmingham. Briarwood Christian has sent a number of top players to Bama.

Trotter had a terrific junior season and has received scholarship offers from Duke, Troy and UAB. He is also receiving interest from Alabama, Auburn, Ole Miss and Tennessee. Trotter attended both Alabama and Auburn summer football camps.

Trotter threw for 2,423 yards and 22 touchdowns and rushed for 477 yards and seven touchdowns in his junior campaign.

Like Brad Smelley following in the footsteps of his brother, Coley White of Daphne is likely to be compared to his brother. Patrick White is the very successful quarterback at West Virginia.

Coley, 6-1, 170, will be the full-time starter at quarterback for Daphne as a senior He has received scholarship offers from Central Michigan, Georgia Tech and West Virginia. He has visited Tuscaloosa, but Alabama has not expressed much interest.

Other Alabama prep quarterbacks who could emerge as

prospects for the Crimson Tide this fall include Morgan Ogilvie (the son of former Tide star Major Ogilvie, who has transferred from Bessemer Academy to Mountain Brook for his senior season), Drew Luker of Sweet Water, Daniel Whitmore of Spring Garden, Tyler Ray of Hoover, Jeremy Williams of Tuscaloosa Central, David Isabelle of J.O. Johnson in Huntsville, Chaz Rogers of Guntersville, and Chris Hood of Birmingham Huffman.

RUNNING BACK

The state is stacked with talented running backs with two of the best committed to The University of Alabama.

Another of the fine prospects at St. Paul's in Mobile is 5-10, 205-pound Ivan Matchett. The Scout.com four-star is the top-ranked running back in the state. Matchett gave his verbal commitment to Alabama in early spring. Since announcing for Bama, he has received a number of offers from major college programs, but he is a solid commitment to the Crimson Tide and does not plan to take any official visits other than to The Capstone.

As a junior Matchett rushed for 1,416 yards and 22 touchdowns.

After many years of seeming to be on the outside in recruiting Mobile, under Saban The University is having great success in the talent-rich area.

Another Tide commitment is running back Jermaine Preyear (5-11, 205) of Mobile Davidson. Even though injured during his junior campaign he rushed for over 900 yards.

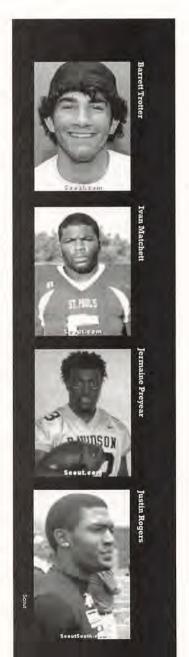
He is a solid commitment to Alabama who has announced he will not take visits to any other school.

Reggie Hunt (5-10, 185 of Daphne is an electrifying prospect who has received several elite scholarship offers, including from Alabama, Auburn, Florida, Oklahoma, Purdue and West Virginia.

He rushed for 709 yards and 12 touchdowns while averaging close to 10 yards per carry during his junior season. He missed a lot of action due to injuries, but is healthy and eager for his senior year.

Hunt has been tightlipped about his recruitment.

Justin Rogers (5-11, 185) had an extraordinary junior season at Vestavia. He rushed for over 2,000 yards, including a 252-yard, three-touchdown performance in the Class 6A





semi-finals against Hoover.

Rogers has received scholarship offers from Alabama, Clemson, LSU and UCLA. He has been to Tuscaloosa on several occasions and has the Tide high on his list.

Rogers is a state champion in track winning the 55-meter dash. He was timed at 4.3 seconds in the 40-yard dash at the ScoutSouth.com combine at Hoover in May.

Anthony Landrum (6-1, 205) of Sweet Water has been impressive throughout his high school career, accumulating 4,930 yards and 75 touchdowns. He had an impressive junior season, rushing for 1,691 yards and 25 touchdowns while splitting time in the backfield with another 1,000-yard rusher.

Landrum, whose father Michael played at Alabama and Southern Miss, has received scholarship offers from Jacksonville State and Southern Mississippi.

Prattville has had one of the state's top football programs for a number of years and The University has benefited from a number of the Prattville stars choosing to play for the Crimson Tide. One of the upcoming senior stars for Prattville this year is 5-8, 175-pound Justin Albert.

Last year he rushed for over 1,600 yards and scored 27 touchdowns. He averaged 170.8 yards per game in last year's playoffs.

Albert has received scholarship offers from Clemson, Ole Miss,

Southern Miss and Vanderbilt.

More prospects are likely to emerge during the season. Among those who will be closely watched include Demetrius Thomas of Theodore, Darrell Reynolds of Brundidge Pike County, Coree Clark of Minor in Adamsville, DeMario Pippen of

Tuscaloosa Central, and Chris Williams of Eufaula.

DEFENSIVE BACK

The top in-state defensive back is Dee Finley (6-3, 205) of Auburn High School. He is a Scout.com four-star safety. Most would expect Auburn to be the likely destination of the hometown star. It was a blow (albeit, maybe only temporary) to the Tigers when Finley committed to Florida in the spring.

Finley had eight interceptions, 50 tackles, and 15 pass break-ups as a junior. Scout.com ranks him as the third-best safety prospect in the nation.

While Finley has committed to Florida, he has said he will take official visits to Alabama, Auburn and LSU.

Wesley Neighbors (6-1, 190) of Huntsville High School is a Scout.com three-star safety and a solid commitment to Alabama. His grandfather, Billy Neighbors, was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame for his play at Bama in the early 1960s. His father, Wes, also played for the Crimson Tide.

Wesley is a hard-hitting prospect who recorded 95 tackles and four interceptions as a junior.

Robert Lester (6-2, 205) of Foley has received nine scholarship offers including from Colorado, Mississippi State, Marshall and Kentucky. He had a great camp performance in Tuscaloosa and is hoping to land at the same school as teammate Julio Jones.

Jarrett Burns (6-3, 185) of Lee High in Huntsville received his first scholarship offer following camp in Tuscaloosa. The surprise offer came from Louisiana Tech as one of their coaches was in attendance. Burns did extremely well at Alabama's camp and hopes a strong start to his senior season will bring more scholarship offers.

Marcal Robinson (6-0, 165) of Prichard Vigor has given his verbal pledge to Arkansas. Robinson had a terrific junior season earning offers from the Razorbacks, Auburn, Louisville, Marshall and Purdue. He does not plan to take any additional official visits.

Marcus Jemison (6-2, 190) of McAdory High in McCalla has seen his stock soar in the summer with scholarship offers arriving from Arkansas, Auburn, Clemson, Houston, Middle Tennessee and Mississippi State. He is also receiving interest from Alabama.

Jemison recorded 40 tackles and six interceptions his junior season.

Another of the Mobile St. Paul's stars is Louis Watson (5-10, 165), a talented prospect who has great closing speed and performs well in coverage.

He has received scholarship offers from Louisville, Mississippi State, Purdue and UAB. He lists the offered schools and Auburn, Florida and LSU as favorites.

Caleb Mitchell (6-0, 175) of Russellville had a great junior season, recording 37 tackles and making six interceptions with three returned for touchdowns. He was all-state in 2006. Middle Tennessee has offered a scholarship, and he is receiving interest from Alabama, Auburn, Clemson, Ole Miss, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Other defensive backs on various recruiting lists include Antonio Johnson of Hale County in Moundville, Criss Williams of Tuscaloosa Central, Kendrick Dennis of Eufaula, Seandre Richardson of Linden, Chase Daniel of Hoover, and Zack Townley of Winfield (who is also listed as a quarterback prospect by some).

FOOTBALL HOT LIST

Although the success of Alabama Football Coach Nick Saban in attracting commitments suggests the Crimson Tide does not need a large list of prospects, the truth is that Bama is considering a number of players and many prospects are interested in the Tide. Here is a list compiled by 'BAMA of those reportedly linked to Alabama.

NAME	POS.	HGT.	WGT.	40-TIME	HOMETOWN (HIGH SCHOOL)	NAME	POS.	HGT.	WGT.	40-TIME	HOMETOWN (HIGH SCHOOL)
Michael Abernathy	FB	5-11	235	4.5	Russellville	Dekendrick Moncrief	WR	6-0	175	N/A	Prattville
Ken Adams	TE	6-5	215	N/A	Enterprise	*Wesley Neighbors	s	6-2	195	4.55	Huntsville
T.J. Barnes	ОТ	6-6	320	N/A	Enterprise	Morgan Ogilvie	QB	6-1	185	4.7	Birmingham (Mountain Brook)
Mark Barron	WR	6-2	205	4.5	Mobile (St. Paul's)	Davin Palmer	RB	5-7	160	4.45	Chelsea
Andre Berry	WR	6-3	195	N/A	Tarrant	Quinton Pierce	WR	6-2	185	4.5	Mobile (Davidson)
*Undra Billingsley	TE	6-3	245	N/A	Birmingham (Woodlawn)	DaMario Pippen	RB	5-10	185	N/A	Tuscaloosa (Central)
*Devonta Bolton	WR	6-4	210	4.5	Norcross, Ga.	Lavanda Powe	DT	6-5	225	N/A	Silas (Southern Choctaw)
*John Michael Boswell	OL	6-5	290	N/A	Tuscaloosa (Tuscaloosa County)	*Jermaine Preyear	RB	5-11	195	N/A	Mobile (Davidson)
Arthur Brown	LB	6-1	225	4.5	Wichita, Kan. (East)	Terrelle Pryor	QB	6-6	210	N/A	Jeannette, Pa.
Deandre Brown	WR	6-6	225	4.5	Ocean Springs, Miss.	Spencer Pybus	LB	6-1	200	N/A	Dothan (Northview)
James Brown	DT	6-1	285	N/A	Cottondale (Paul W. Bryant)	*Melvin Ray	WR	6-3	205	4.5	Tallahassee, Fla. (No. Fla. Chris.)
Justin Brown	WR	5-9	152	N/A	Athens	Darrell Reynolds	СВ	5-10	180	N/A	Brundidge (Pike County)
T.J. Bryant	СВ	6-0	175	N/A	Tallahassee, Fla. (Lincoln)	Jeremy Rice	RB	5-8	185	4.54	Madison (Madison Academy)
Jarrett Burns	QB	6-3	185	N/A	Huntsville (Lee)	Chaz Rogers	QB	6-2	200	N/A	Guntersville
Scott Byrd	DT	6-2	250	4.9	Mobile (St. Paul's)	Justin Rogers	RB	5-11	180	4.5	Vestavia Hills
Alex Davis	DE	6-3	236	4.7	Birmingham (Briarwood Christian)	Jomarcus Savage	DT	6-2	260	N/A	Huntsville (Johnson)
Peters Drey	ОТ	6-5	280	N/A	Mobile (McGill-Toolen)	*Burton Scott	WR	5-10	190	4.4	Prichard (Vigor)
Teavis Durgin	ОТ	6-6	295	N/A	Daphne	Darrell Simmons	S	6-4	201	4.65	College Park, Ga. (Banneker)
Daniel Forester	DE	6-4	240	N/A	Birmingham (Briarwood Christian)	*Brad Smelley	WR	6-3	215	N/A	Tuscaloosa (American Christian)
LaFrazier Frost	СВ	5-10	175	N/A	Mobile (B.C. Rain)	*Corey Smith	к	6-0	190	N/A	Bunker Hill, W. Va. (Musselman)
Matthew Gordon	WR	6-0	185	4.55	Birmingham (Briarwood Christian)	P.J. Smith	s	6-4	190	4.5	River Ridge, La. (John Curtis)
Robby Green	СВ	6-0	180	4.4	River Ridge, La. (John Curtis)	David Spurlock	DL	6-5	290	N/A	Murfreesboro, Tenn. (Riverdale)
William Green	DE	6-5	208	N/A	Birmingham (Spain Park)	*Damian Square	DL	6-3	275	4.75	Houston, Texas (Yates)
Dévon Hairston	s	6-1	175	N/A	Enterprise	Korey Suggs	LB	6-1	210	N/A	Russellville
Glenn Harbin	DE	6-5	230	N/A	Mobile (McGill-Toolen)	Demetrius Thomas	RB	6-1	200	N/A	Theodore
Jarrell Harris	LB	6-3	208	4.5	Gadsden (Gadsden City)	Jacoby Thomas	LB	N/A	N/A	N/A	Mobile (Murphy)
Chris Hood	QB	6-1	190	N/A	Birmingham (Huffman)	Johnny Thompson	LB	6-1	205	4.6	Fairfax (Valley)
*Destin Hood	WR	6-2	182	4.5	Mobile (St. Paul's)	Chris Tolliver	WR	6-2	205	4.5	Rayville, La.
Reggie Hunt	RB	5-8	180	4.4	Daphne	Zack Townley	СВ	5-11	185	4.65	Winfield
David Isabelle	QB	6-3	180	N/A	Huntsville (Johnson)	Lavertis Towns	LB	6-2	210	N/A	Dora
Star Jackson	QB	6-3	185	4.5	Lake Worth, Fla.	Barrett Trotter	QB	6-2	195	4.6	Birmingham (Briarwood Christian)
Terrell Jackson	LB	6-1	190	N/A	Prattville	Demarkus Underwood	DT	6-5	295	N/A	Leighton (Colbert County)
Barrett Jones	ОТ	6-5	270	N/A	Cordova, Tenn. (Evangelical Christian)	*Courtney Upshaw	DE	6-2	225	N/A	Eufaula
Eric Jones	ОТ	6-6	275	N/A	Birmingham (Spain Park)	Lemanski Ware	LB	6-2	205	N/A	Lanett
Julio Jones	WR	6-4	212	4,5	Foley	Louis Watson	СВ	5-10	165	4.47	Mobile (St. Paul's)
Anthony Landrum	RB	6-1	205	4.6	Sweet Water	Coley White	QB	6-1	170	N/A	Daphne
Robert Lester	s	6-2	205	4,6	Foley	Marsellos Wilder	WR	6-2	190	N/A	Tuscaloosa (Central)
*Brandon Lewis	DE	6-3	260	N/A	Pleasant Grove	Rodriguez Wilks	WR	6-1	196	4.56	Smyrna, Tenn.
Josh Looney	от	6-3	312	N/A	Lake Worth, Fla.	Branden Williams	s	5-10	185	4.55	Phenix City (Russell County)
*Tyler Love	OL	6-7	270	N/A	Birmingham (Mountain Brook)	DeMario Williams	WR	6-3	182	4.55	Columbia, Tenn. (Central)
*Ivan Malchett	RB	5-10	205	4.6	Mobile (St. Paul's)	Jeremy Williams	QB	6-0	200	N/A	Tuscaloosa (Central)
Antoine McClain	ОТ	6-6	313	N/A	Anniston	*Michael Williams	DE	6-6	240	4.7	Reform (Pickens County)
Greg McGrue	ОТ	6-8	350	5.4	Birmingham (Huffman)	Jamie Womack	LB	6-1	210	N/A	Ozark (Carroll)
Caleb Mitchell	СВ	6-0	175	4.4	Russellville	Lemarcus Wright	WR	6-2	210	N/A	Lanett

Never-Ending

Tide basketball recruiting a year-round process

No one would ever suggest that interest in Alabama basketball recruiting is as fervent as the year-round fanaticism associated with Crimson Tide football recruiting. But never doubt that Bama roundball fans keep a close eye, too.

As evidence, consider a summer meeting of the Alabama alumni association Birmingham chapter. The speaker was a member of the Alabama football staff. So it surprised some when a businessman (and basketball season ticket holder) asked the staff member about a rumor he had heard.

"Did you hear the staff's heading to Orlando for the AAU tournament?" he asked. "I hear they're going to try to get commitments from Andrew (Steele) and Jamychal (Green)."

The staffer could not have commented on recruiting even if he had known what the fan was talking about, but the fact a basketball recruiting question was asked says a lot.

It's not known for sure if the whole staff of assistants went to said tourney (Head Coach Mark Gottfried was in Brazil at the time assisting in the Pan-Am Games), and, while the anticipated commitments of the state's two two seniors-to-be didn't occur that weekend, both may well be Tide pledges by the time this story is read. In fact, Steele committed to Bama. Gottfried, and his assistants are regulars at AAU tournaments. It's necessary to stay ahead in today's world of college basketball recruiting.

The 6-foot-3 Steele, who is the younger brother of Tide star Ronald, and the powerful 6-8 Green are friends and AAU teammates. Both have said they'd enjoy playing together at the next level. Steele, who plays winters at Birmingham's John Carroll Catholic, and Green, who patrols the paint at Montgomery's St. Jude, both narrowed their collegiate choices to two and three, respectively, in early August. Alabama made both players' lists, as did the Ole Miss Rebels of second-year Coach Andy Kennedy. Steele's third finalist was Tennessee, whose flamboyant Coach Bruce Pearl had made the younger Steele a priority. Green had listed Georgia Tech as his third school of choice, but dropped the Yellow Jackets in early August while telling Scout.com basketball recruiting expert Dave Telep he planned to play in the SEC with his Alabama Challenge AAU teammate, Steele. "Right now it's Alabama and Ole Miss," Green said. "I was planning on staying at home and both are close to home so I narrowed. I'm family-oriented and I just wanted to stay (close to) home."

Many assumed Steele would give his pledge to Bama due to his brother's career at The Capstone and his family's good relationship with Gottfried and his staff. "It's going to help because I know how (Ronald) likes it, and we like a lot of the same things," Andrew Steele told Scout.com before committing. "If he can be happy going there I know I could, but that's not the only thing that I'll look at. It doesn't mean that I'm a lock to go there, but it does help.

"I just like the way they play and I how Coach Gottfried coaches. It's kind of like laid back and they run sometimes and sometimes they slow it down. They do a little bit of both and I kind of like that."

Steele, who is a four-star Scout prospect ranked 80th in the nation, said he hoped to get a few campus visits in before resuming his duties as quarterback of the Cavaliers, football squad.

Green, a 225-pounder with a chiseled physique, has a long-time relationship with the Tide staff as well, as Bama Assistant Coach (and ace recruiter) Phillip Pearson has been involved with his fellow Montgomery native since Green's sophomore season for the Pirates. Green averaged a double-double (points and rebounds) for St Jude en route to the AHSAA Final Four. Steele led the Cavs to the 2007 5A title at the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center.

Green is a Scout five-star (highest) prospect who is ranked the 17th best prospect in the nation.

Should Steele and Green head to Tuscaloosa, they'll join one of the fastest rising prospects in the South. Tony Mitchell, a 6-6 small forward from Swainsboro, Georgia, cast his lot with Bama in July. "He's going to make a big impact," said James Clark, Mitchell's AAU coach. "He's a jump-shooter, but its hard to say because he's a great jumper, too. He's got a good vertical and he shoots it well. This kid can put the ball in the hole. The kid can shoot the ball." Some compare Mitchell to a pre-injury Kennedy Winston, with more hops. That's good company.

Mitchell chose Bama over South Carolina and Cincinnati.
There are three candidates for what will probably be the final spot in the Tide's November signing class should Steele and Green come aboard. The top target appears to be the very large J'mison Morgan, who is listed at 6-feet-10, 275 pounds.

Should the Dallas native join Green in Tuscaloosa, the future Tide would be downright lethal inside. A great recruiting relationship with new Tide Assistant Kobie Baker (the former director of basketball operations) has Bama in a good position with Morgan, who sports written offers from UCLA, Kansas, Georgetown, Arizona, and Cincinnati, among others. Morgan has visited Tuscaloosa and reported he had a nice time hanging out with current Tide freshmen Rico Pickett and Senario Hillman. The big man is ranked in the nation's top 10 at the center position, and in the top 50 overall by most recruiting services.

Two others who could wind up in Tuscaloosa depending on how the chips fall are 6-10 Dothan forward Xavier Gibson, who is hoping for an unlikely Florida offer (and does have one from nearby Florida State), and 6-1 guard Frankie Sullivan of Uniontown. Sullivan may not find room in the already-crowded Tide backcourt, and ex-Tide player and assistant Mike Davis has made the dynamic Sullivan a priority for UAB's fall class. The Uniontown native has also drawn recent interest from Rick Stansbury and the Mississippi State Bulldogs.

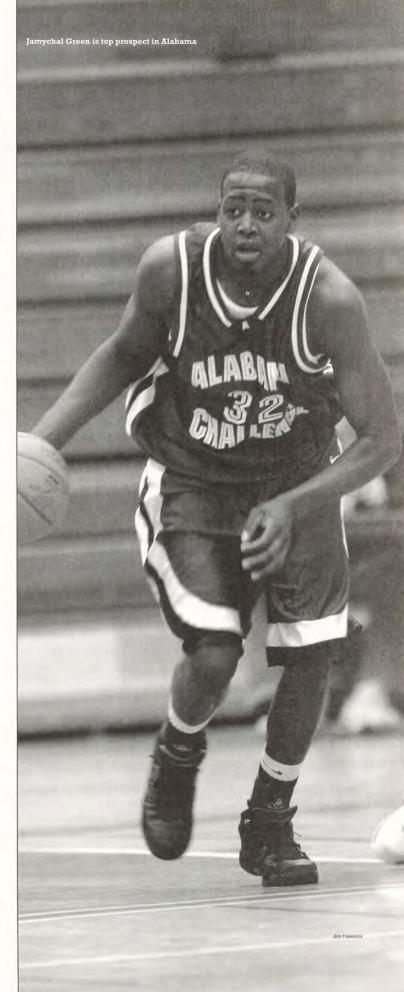
There are quite a few rising stars in the underclass ranks in Alabama, and none bigger than 6-9, 235-pound DeMarcus Cousins, formerly of Birmingham's Erwin High. Cousins was suspended mid-season for a post-game altercation with a coach, but played well on the summer AAU circuit and plans to enroll at Clay-Chalkville high school this season. Cousins still shows occasional anger issues, as evidenced by a flare-up on the AAU circuit, and any college coach who signs him knows he could well be a "one-and-done" player before heading off to the NBA. That said, he has an Alabama offer, though the aforementioned Davis and UAB have steadily climbed in Cousins' good graces. Cousins looks at Davis like father figure, and often plays pick-up games with current Blazer players. This one will get interesting, but bear in mind the young man can't sign anywhere until November, 2008.

Cousins is by far the cream-of-the-2009 crop in-state, but he's not alone. Christian Watford, 6-7, 215, of Hewitt-Trussville high school is a battler in the paint whose perimeter game is ever-improving. The Tide has been recruiting Watford for two years. In fact, after last season's home win over Kentucky, Watford's dad Ernest, a Jefferson County sheriff's deputy, was seen high-fiving Gottfried as the Tide coach left the court at Coleman Coliseum. One rumor has it that Watford is also transferring to Clay-Chalkville, which would make that a powerful inside team with Cousins and Watford playing together.

One sophomore-to-be (class of 2010) is already climbing the charts and in contact with the UA staff.

Some scouts compare 6-4, 190-pound Raulston Turner of Muscle Shoals High School to NBA star Ray Allen (and the aforementioned Winston). While Bama is Turner's very early leader, the young man will draw national attention and could even be selected to the prestigious McDonald's All-American game. He's that good.

For now, Gottfried and staff will concentrate on the November, 2007 signing period, and should the Tide land Steele, Green, and any one of Morgan, Gibson or Sullivan, look for UA to sport a national Top 10 class.



Where Are They Now?

Mike Hall hasn't forgotten 1966 slight

The 1966 Alabama football team may get those rings yet. While some of the players on that famous Alabama team-a two-time defending national championship squad that went undefeated yet was denied a national championship three-peat-have made their peace with the injustice, Mike Hall, a star sophomore linebacker on that team, still sees a naked finger on his hand.

"I've often thought about having a ring cast for all our team members," Hall, now 60, said. "The seniors on that team finished their careers with two national championship rings. The juniors got one ring. We sophomores got none. I'd love to be wearing one right now."

Notre Dame, which had a worse record than the Crimson Tide, was voted number one in 1966. Hall still pulls against the Irish today. "Just every time they play," he said with a laugh.

Hall was one of a handful of sophomore starters on the 1966 team. But he wasn't just a starter; he was a standout, earning All-Southeastern Conference honors. Other stars on that team included Kenny Stabler, Ray Perkins, Dennis Homan, Cecil Dowdy, Jerry Duncan, Bobby Johns, John Calvert, Dickey Thompson, Richard Cole and Wayne Cook.

"That team played together better than any team I had seen up to that time," said Hall, who, as a teenager watched second halves of Alabama games while working as a Legion Field usher. "You didn't have to worry about your back. Somebody had it for you. We also had a tremendous amount of senior leadership on that team, and it filtered down to the underclassmen."

Alabama slipped from 11-0 in 1966 to 8-2-1 in 1967 to 8-3 in 1968. Hall put together a solid but unspectacular season in 1967 before producing a breakout year in 1968. Two games in particular helped establish the Tarrant native as one of Alabama's all-time top linebackers. Against Clemson, Hall racked up a then school-record 24 tackles, since eclipsed by DeMeco Ryans' 25 stops against Arkansas in 2003.

"If you're making that many tackles, it means the defense is on the field too much," Hall said. "As for me making them, I think it was more of just being in the right place at the right time. We were just fortunate to win that ball game."

Five weeks later against rival Auburn, Hall turned in the best allaround performance of his Tide career, stealing the show in Alabama's
24-16 win-Bama's fifth-straight over the Tigers. His 16 tackles and two
interceptions were impressive enough, but then he also got in a few
snaps wearing a number 82 jersey so he could inflict more damage as
a tight end. He caught a five-yard touchdown pass from Scott Hunter
and also provided a key block on another score. The fact that he was
still wearing the number 54 helmet with his number 82 pullover jersey
prompted one official to throw a flag, but the penalty was later waved
off when the official figured out what had happened. Hall had worn the
jersey over his regular jersey in order to play at tight end.

"I was fired up that day, and I knew I had to do something because it was my last regular season game," Hall said. "I'm glad to be one of those Alabama players who can say he never lost to Auburn."

Coach Paul Bryant called Hall's performance against the Tigers "one of the finest individual performances I've ever witnessed."

It was a fitting regular-season conclusion for a career that began with extremely high expectations-expectations that started with Hall himself.

"I grew up near Birmingham and when I was in high school in 1961,

Alabama won the national championship," Hall said. "Lee Roy Jordan was the star linebacker on that team, and he was my idol. I wanted to go to Alabama and play for Coach Bryant and be like Lee Roy."

Truth is, many didn't just want Hall to be the next Jordan. They expected him to be. Some even thought the 6-foot, 227-pound Hall, who appeared to be more physically gifted than Jordan in terms of size, speed and strength, might even turn out to be better than his predecessor. However, two seasons wearing the number 54 jersey Jordan made famous seemed to prove only that Hall was a good, above-average linebacker-as evidenced by his two-time All-SEC recognition-but not a great one.

"I think he must be the strongest man who ever walked on the field," Bryant was once quoted as saying of Hall. "He's good enough, he could win a football game all by himself if he decided to."

It wasn't until Hall's senior season that the burly linebacker finally began tapping into his enormous potential and reaching true gridiron greatness. Following the Auburn game, Bryant reportedly said this about Hall: "If Mike Hall is not an All-American, they ought to quit having All-Americans. He's been great all year and is an All-American if I eyer saw one."

Bryant wouldn't be disappointed. Hall, who logged 120 tackles in 1968, did indeed earn All-America accolades and would later add another distinguished honor to his resume-being named to Alabama's Team of the Decade for the 1960s, right alongside his hero, fellow linebacker Lee Roy Jordan.

Hall said he had a good relationship with the man who coached both he and Jordan at Alabama.

"He was the boss," Hall said of Bryant. "I found out that if you did what he told you to do, there'd be no problems. He was tough but fair, and I still try to practice the life lessons he instilled in us. One of them is to be 10 to 15 minutes early for an appointment or meeting. He would say if you're on time, you're late."

Another lesson: If you're getting worked on in the training room, be sure the door is closed.

"I remember one time in the training room, Dickey Thompson, one of our rover backs who could strike as hard a lick as anybody, was sitting in there and the trainer was putting some type of antibiotic on a scrape he had," Hall recalled. "Coach Bryant happened to walk by, glanced inside the training room and said, "Well, I'll be doggone! I never thought I'd see you in here.' Sometime later on that season, Coach Bryant was in the training room and he was getting fixed up for some type of minor injury, and wouldn't you know it, Dickey walked by, looked in and said, 'Well, I'll be doggone! I never thought I'd see you in here.' Dickey put it right back to him, and all Coach Bryant could do was laugh."

Following his Bama career, Hall was taken in the 10th round of the 1969 NFL Draft by the New York Jets. He played in some preseason exhibition games but was cut before the season started. Hall said he has no regrets about his short stint in pro ball.

"I've got two good knees and two good ankles today," he said. "I might not have those if I had had a long NFL career. I certainly enjoyed it while I was there, and I would have loved to stay longer, but it just didn't work out."

Hall returned to his home state and went back to school for a while



University of Alabama

before going into the work force. He retired from the tractor business in 2002 and went to work for his wife, Gwen, at All-American Signs. The couple resides in Havana, a small town near Moundville. They have one son, Sam, 30, who is attending graduate school at UAB. Another son, William, was killed in an airplane accident in 1995. He was 16.

"Just time," Hall said when asked about what has helped him deal with such a loss. "He was a great son. For me, seeing him was like watching myself grow up." When he's not busy helping run the family business with his wife, Hall spends time fishing, bird-hunting and gardening. He also enjoys reunion events with his former Alabama teammates as well as keeping up with today's Tide. He anticipates new Alabama Coach Nick Saban faring well at The Capstone.

"He's a disciplinarian," Hall said. "... I'm looking forward to the future."

As for the past, maybe Hall's ring idea will help.

'BAMA Scorecard

Notebooking Crimson Tide Sports

"C" Stands For Cap And Gown

Before the season even got started, Alabama junior center Antoine Caldwell set a Crimson Tide record. Available records show that Caldwell became the first Alabama football player to earn his degree in three years.

He was one of five Alabama players who took part in The University's summer graduation exercises in mid-August, just before going out for a pre-season scrimmage.

Also donning cap and gown for the ceremony were senior wide receiver Matt Caddell, senior placekicker Jamie Christensen, senior defensive tackle Joshua Curry, and senior offensive tackle Chris Capps.

Almost everyone noticed that all five graduates have last names beginning with the letter "C."

Alabama opened the season with six graduates on the team. Senior linebacker Keith Saunders earned his degree prior to summer school.

And nine more Alabama football players are scheduled to take part in December graduation ceremonies.

"We're very proud of these guys," Alabama Football Coach Nick Saban said. "That's something that gives them a chance to be successful in life. I was very proud to see them in cap and gown. I was happy for them and their families that they completed a big part of what is important to us here."

Prior to the exercises, Saban met with the players and their families.

Pan-Am Experience

Alabama Basketball Coach Mark Gottfried may have had slightly mixed emotions about serving as an assistant coach for the United States basketball team at the Pan-American Games in Rio de Janiero, Brazil, this summer. That's because two Crimson Tide players, upcoming junior forwards Richard Hendrix and Alonzo Gee, were not selected for the squad after being among those invited to tryout camp.

Other Alabama athletes and former athletes and coaches and former coaches also participated in the games in Brazil.

Former Tide star Kelly Kretschman was a member of the U.S. softball team, and former Bama assistant coach Karen Johns was a coach of that squad.

Former Alabama basketball player Leslie Claybrook Robinson was officiating both men's and women's basketball games.

Former Alabama swimmer Arlene Semeco won two silver medals and set a Pan-Am record. Semeco, a native of Venezuela, won the silver medal in both the 50-meter and 100-meter freestyle events. Semeco, who owns the Alabama school record in the 50 freestyle, broke the Pan American

Games record in the event in the semi-finals, posting a 25.14.

"Arlene has been competing internationally for several years, including the 2004 Olympics, but this is by far her best performance at this level and it really puts her in good shape for the push toward the 2008 Olympics," Alabama Coach Eric McIlguham said.

In other Crimson Tide action, rising sophomore Augustina de Giovanni, swimming for her native Argentina, took sixth in the championship finals of the 200-meter breaststroke, moving up a spot from her semi-finals finish. She touched the wall at 2:36.02, shaving more than two seconds off her semi-final time. Earlier at these Games, she finished ninth in the 100m breaststroke, just out of the championship finals.

During her rookie season, de Giovanni earned a place in Alabama's all-time top-10 in seven different events.

Former Tider Tahesia Harrigan took home a fourth place finish in the 100 meters. She represented her native country of the British Virgin Islands.

Rolls Royce Team

On the website www.espn.com, columnist Dick Vitale has named his annual preseason college basketball 2007-08 All-Rolls Royce team, and Alabama's Ron Steele and Richard Hendrix are among the players he lists.

Both are listed on the fourth team. Vitale describes Steele, Bama's senior point guard who is coming back from April surgeries on both his knees by saying, "The Tide must have a healthy Steele running the offense." Steele is expected to have made a full recovery from the surgeries by the time Alabama reports to practice in October.

As for Hendrix, who will be a junior forward, Vitale says, "Hendrix is a force inside for 'Bama and could be the key to a surprising year for the Tide."

Both Tide stars are All-Southeastern Conference players.

Basketball, Eh?

For the first time in school history, Alabama basketball was scheduled to take its game to Canada. Alabama was to travel to Ottawa on Labor Day weekend to play four exhibition games, all against Canadian university teams.

"This will be a great learning experience," said Coach Mark Gottfried prior to the trip. "Having this opportunity to take the incoming freshmen and allow them to get playing experience will be a great team-builder. The opportunity to look at our older players along with the younger players together should give us a very good perspective on our team."

Alabama returns four starters from its 2006-07 squad

with Jermareo Davidson having signed with the Carolina Bobcats of the NBA following completion of his Bama eligibility. Returning starters are Richard Hendrix, Alonzo Gee, Ron Steele, and Brandon Hollinger.

The NCAA allows basketball programs to go on international trips once every four years. They are allowed a total of 10 team practices within a specific time frame leading up to the trip.

Alabama was to play four exhibition games within three days in Ottawa, against McGill University, the University of Ottawa, Carleton University, and Queens University.

Alabama's last international exhibition trip was to Nassau, Bahamas in August, 2003, to play games against teams from the Bahamian islands, including the Bahamian national team. The Tide won all five of those games.

More Honors For Salem

Emeel Salem did it all as an Alabama student-athlete, an all-star on the field and a scholar in the classroom. And his athletics success continues. He was named to the New York-Penn League All-Star Game, played at Dutchess Stadium in Wappingers Falls, New York.

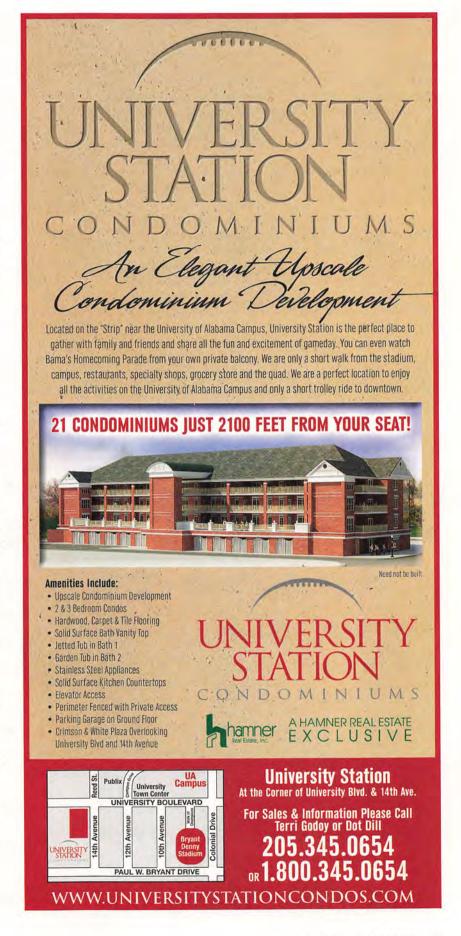
Salem played for the American League affiliates in the third annual New York-Penn League All-Star Game in his home ballpark. There are two unique things about the NYPL All-Star Game. It's the only Short-Season league to have an All-Star Game; and second, it's the only Minor League mid-summer Classic that pits the American League affiliates against their National League rivals.

Through 37 games, Salem was batting .319 (46-for-144) with one home run and 11 RBI. He had 27 runs scored, six doubles, three triples and 25 stolen bases (28 attempts), second in the league in stolen bases and ninth in average and triples.

Two Out Of Three

Two out of three ain't bad, goes the saying. For the second time in three years, Alabama golfer Joseph Sykora has won the Alabama state match play championship.

Sykora, who will be a senior on the Crimson Tide golf team this fall was playing in the seventh State Match Play Championship at FarmLinks Golf Club in Sylacauga. He made six birdies in a row in the final match to claim the title. The Daphne native defeated Harvin Groft of Florence 7 and 5 in the finals to win. In the semifinals he defeated Hoover's John Darby in 19 holes and in the quarterfinals he beat Brewton's Robbie Cotton in 19 holes. Sykora



made nine birdies in the semifinals, including eight in a row in his 13 holes of play.

Go West

Five Alabama golfers were among those in the prestigious Western Amateur Championship this summer. The Western is golf's second oldest amateur event. The tournament, a gruelling eight rounds in five days, was held at Point O'Woods Golf and Country Club in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

It began with a qualifying round, followed by 72 holes of stroke play over three days. The final 16 played match competition.

Past champions of this event include Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Phil Mickelson and Ben Crenshaw.

Alabama was represented by five golfers, all of them exempt from the qualifier. They are Mark Harrell, Thomas Hugghins, Matthew Swan, Michael Thompson and Gator Todd. It was the third Western Amateur appearance for Hugghins, the second for Swan, and the first for Harrell, Thompson and Todd.

Four of the five made it through the first two rounds of medal play, but only Harrell advanced to match play. The Hazlehurst, Georgia, native, who earlier in the summer played as an amateur in the United States Open, finished tied for eighth in stroke play. He was three-under-par for 72 holes.

Harrell was eliminated in his first match.

Summer Work

Alabama Tennis Coach Billy Pate was chosen to coach the

USTA Southern Boys team for the second consecutive year. And for the second consecutive year Pate led that squad to the national championship finals of the USTA Boys 18 National Team Tournament.

The Southern team was the number two seed at the tournament, held at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Southern California was the top seed. Pate's squad cruised through the bracket to the championship match. Southern defeated Mid-Atlantic, 5-2, in the first round before shutting out the Intermountain squad, 7-0, to reach the quarterfinals. The team then dominated Florida, 6-1, in the semi-finals before falling to Southern California, 4-3, in the final match.

It was the second straight year for Pate's team to lose to Southern California in the finals.

Beyond Pan-Am

In addition to competition in the Pan-Am Games this summer, Alabama track and field athletes had success in other competitions. After winning the Jamaican Junior National Championship in the 100 meter hurdles, Kimberly Laing brought home the bronze medal with her performance Pan-America Junior Championships in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Laing turned in a time of 13.85, which was her second fastest career time. She turned in a time of 13.67 to win the Jamaican junior national championships and earn a spot on team Jamaica for the Junior Pan-American Championships. She will be a sophomore at Bama this year.

Former Tide All-America high jumper Miruna





Mataoanu took home first place at the Romanian Championships in Bucurest, Romania. Mataoanu tied her personal record with a jump of 6 feet, 3 inches to win the national championship. The jump also propelled her into the 32nd spot in International Association of Athletics

Federation (IAAF) world list. She was previously ranked 41st in the world.

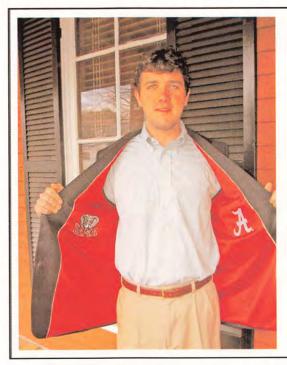
The mark set at the Romanian National Championships is the same height she reached at the NCAA Championships in May to set the new Crimson Tide high jump record and earn a second place NCAA finish.

Alabama rising sophomore
Emmanuel Bor advanced to the
final round in the 1500 meters race
at the World University Games in
Bangkok, Thailand. In the first round of
competition at Thammasat University
Stadium, Bor ran a personal best time
of 3:43.89. His time was fifth place in
his heat and ninth overall. The top three
finishers from each of the three heats
received an automatic spot in the finals,
the last three spots were claimed by the
fastest times not receiving an automatic
advancement.

"I am very pleased," Alabama

Cross Country Coach Joe Walker said. "This is a great showing by one of our Tide athletes against the best in the world."

Bor's time was on a pace for a sub-four-minute mile, which is 1600 meters, and is the sixth fastest time in school history.



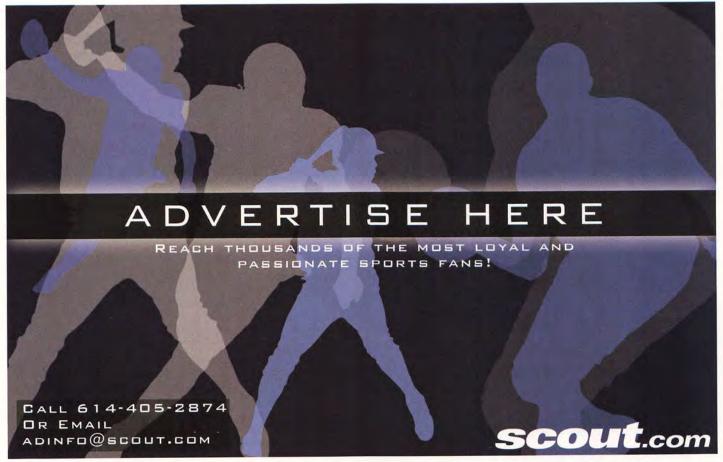
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Early Start

Spring sports teams have an autumn agenda



A labama's football, volleyball, soccer and cross country teams are in action now. Swimming and diving and basketball squads are nearing the start of their seasons. Gymnastics will be close behind them.

But don't think that Alabama's other sports, especially those whose championships don't roll around until May or June, are lounging around, taking things easy until after the New Year.

Nothing could be farther than from the truth.

Alabama's "spring" sports, which include baseball, golf, rowing, softball and tennis, have fall to prepare for their championships and they use every moment allowed by NCAA rules. (Track and field is a spring sport, but also a winter sport, and several members of the track teams are involved in fall cross country.)

Golf has the longest competitive season in collegiate sport, starting in September and stretching into the first days of June for the NCAA Championships. While the span from the first drive off the tee to the final putt is 10 months, there is a three and a half month break in the tournament schedule, from early November to mid February.

From the first tournament, golfers are playing as a team and each tournament finish figures in rankings. Last year, the Tide men used a stellar fall, one that saw them win four tournaments and hold the top spot in the national rankings from late September through February, as a stepping stone to a sixth place NCAA Championship finish, its best since the days of Jerry Pate in the mid-1970s.

"To be a national contender, there's a confidence level you need to have, that you believe you're one of the best teams," Coach Jay Seawell said. "And how we played in the fall last year really set that up. You use the fall to try to find your lineup and to evaluate where your team is. Hopefully we can do those things we did last fall again this year because it really did set up our whole year."

Seawell and Co. are still reaping the benefits of last fall and the spring that followed. Alabama's top five from the end of the last season were to jump right into competition mere days after returning to campus, traveling to Narita, Japan to play in the Topy Cup.

The tournament committee picked the four American teams it considered the best to compete in the event against top Japanese squads. Alabama was to be joined by defending NCAA Champion Stanford, Duke and Clemson.

Seawell said. "It's kind of a quick turnaround. We usually have a few weeks of practice before we get started."

The trip to Japan was to get the Tide's season started earlier than normal and has the Tide competing back-to-back-to-back weekends for most of the fall. Seawell says he will use the situation as an opportunity to play a much more fluid lineup than he might otherwise. That in turn will help maintain a high level of competition for spots in the top five.

"Because of that, it sets the ball in motion a little earlier,"

Seawell said. "It's going to be a different fall than we had last season. As a matter of fact we probably won't play the same lineup from week to week to week. I feel comfortable that we have a championship caliber team, however I'm hoping to use a little bit of this fall, and the different aspect that the Japan trip brings, to bring some more competition (within the team). I don't want the guys who played so well last year to get too complacent.

"To win a national championship, you have to have a lot of things on your side, but the biggest thing is toughness and I think if you can create your own toughness within your team then that's the magic component."

The women's golf squad also used last fall to set themselves up for a strong showing during the championship season. Mic Potter, the 2007 SEC Coach of the Year, led his team to a 23rd place finish at the NCAA Championship. It was the Tide's third appearance at the national tournament. The Tide posted a second place finish at the Derby Invitational near the end of its fall schedule before returning in the spring, when it posted three top-five finishes, including fifth at the SEC Championships, its best conference finish since 1998.

And while golf plays all its tournaments in the team format from the word go, collegiate tennis takes a different tack, with schools sending players, usually as a group, to play as individuals and doubles tandems to tournaments both regional and national. These individual tournaments start in mid-September and stretch into the first days of November. This is where the athletes start to build a case for being ranked in singles and doubles.

Alabama's men and women, coached by Billy Pate and Jenny Mainz respectively, will play in several events this fall and both have a home event on the calendar. The women were to host the annual Roberta Alison Fall Classic September 28-30 (Alison is legendary for having played on the men's team in the 1960s) while the men bring the Crimson Tide Championships to the Tide's tennis stadium October 26-28.

While the Tide's individual and doubles rankings are built on fall tournaments among other factors, the first team rankings come from a coaches' poll. About six weeks into the spring dual match season, the rankings move to a computer system that takes many factors into consideration including wins and losses and strength of schedule.

Alabama's men, which were very young last season (and return all but one player from last year's roster in 2007-08), used the fall of 2006 to build experience and team chemistry as well as find its doubles teams. That work paid off when Pate took his team to the NCAA "Sweet 16" finish last May, the Tide's second since he became head coach in 2002.

Alabama's newest sport, rowing, uses its fall season as a time to test the mettle of its "novices". The novice roster is made up of first year team members, many of whom, especially in the first years of the Tide program, are in their first year of rowing.

"The fall is when our novices figure out if they have what it takes to be a part of this team," Coach Larry Davis said. "Rowing demands a tremendous amount of hard work, dedication and drive. It's not for everyone. But since so much of our roster, especially here in the early days of the program, comes from students who are already at Alabama, already on campus, it's good to have that period for both the coaches and the athletes to see if it's a good match."

The rowing team's fall season is made up of both countless early morning practices and trips to large invitationals, both regional and national. The fall season also allows the Tide to decide who will row in what boat and what position, or seat, she will have within that boat. In the spring, the Tide will mix in dual meets, both at home on the Black Warrior River and away, with invitationals and the season ending championship season.

It's probably baseball and softball fall work that comes the closest to emulating the spring practice scenario of football.

Both sports, like football, have a set number of team practice days and they spend a lot of time scrimmaging. But baseball and softball have the advantage of having the entire team, outside of the occasional mid-year addition, in place during preseason practice whereas football is practicing, by and large, without its freshman class.

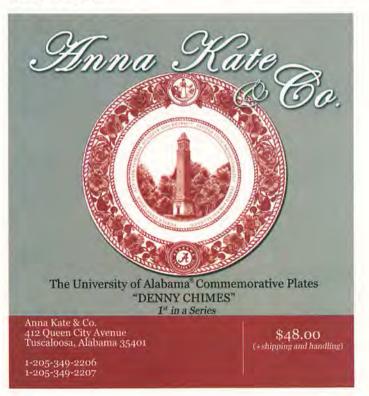
Softball has the advantage of playing in two games against outside competition, which the Tide dubs Fall Brawl I and Fall Brawl II. Baseball, which used to have a full slate of fall games against local teams, has to make do with scrimmaging Tide on Tide. That's not to say there isn't interest in seeing such competition. While fall scrimmages don't draw near the 92,138 that football did last spring (to be fair, no team in the history of collegiate sports has drawn that kind of crowd for a scrimmage), they can draw a 1,000 or so fans in to see how the pitching is developing and to hear the ping of the bat as the ball flies.

And while team practices certainly help the team come together, the baseball and softball squads will also gain a tremendous amount of good from the individual practices they are allowed throughout the fall with one coach working with up to four athletes on individual skills, honing the basics.

Each fall also brings a different challenge or need for the team. This season Jim Wells will doubtlessly be spending no small amount of energy looking to fill the Tide's void behind the plate hoping to find his next catcher. Softball on the other hand lost just one starter from last year's NCAA Super Regional team and will be working four newcomers into the mix. Because most of his squad returns intact from last season, Coach Pat Murphy, now in his 10th season as the Tide's head man, will put his team through more scrimmages this fall, with live pitching and hitting to get his squad game ready.

"I'm thankful that softball is a spring sport," Murphy said. "We can spend four months getting ready for our season, and while we'll work a lot on team chemistry, playing as a team and just working out the kinks from the summer, our main goal is getting fit for season. Weights and conditioning are our priority.

"We say it all the time: work hard now to be successful in the spring," Murphy said.



2007 Alabama Fall Schedules

FOOTBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	CT (TV)	SERIES RECORD
September 1	Western Carolina	Tuscaloosa	6:00 (PPV)	UofA leads 1-0-0
September 8	Vanderbilt	Nashville	11:30 (LF)	UofA leads 57-19-4
September 15	Arkansas	Tuscaloosa	5:45 (ESPN)	UofA leads 10-7-0
September 22	Georgia	Tuscaloosa	2:30 (CBS)	UofA leads 35-24-4
September 29	Florida State	Jacksonville		UofA leads 2-0-1
October 6	Houston	Tuscaloosa	(Homecoming)	UofA leads 9-0-0
October 13	Mississippi	Oxford		UofA leads 43-9-2
October 20	Tennessee	Tuscaloosa	2:30 (CBS)	UofA leads 44-38-7
October 27	Open			
November 3	LSU	Tuscaloosa	4:00 (CBS)	UofA leads 43-22-5
November 10	Mississippi State	Starkville		Uof A leads 72-16-3
November 17	Louisiana-Monroe	Tuscaloosa		UofA leads 1-0-0
November 24	Auburn	Auburn	12:30 (CBS)	UofA leads 38-32-1
December 1 (CBS will choos	SEC Championship se between UA-FSU an	Atlanta d Auburn-Flori	4:00 (CBS) da at 4 p.m. Se	2 wins, 3 losses pt. 29 and will choose

VOLLEYBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	СТ
	@ Oklahoma Invitational	
Aug. 24-25	Oklahoma, Seton Hall, Denver	TBA
	Academy Sports Invitational	
Aug. 31	Illinois State, UAB	
Sept. 2	Sacramento State	TBA
	@ Notre Dame Invitational	
Sept. 7-8	Charleston, Ohio, Notre Dame	TBA
Sept. 14	@ Tennessee	6:00
Sept. 16	@ Kentucky	12:30
Sept. 19	@ Mississippi State	7:00
Sept. 23	Arkansas	1:30
Sept. 28	South Carolina	7:00
Sept. 30	Florida	7:00
Oct. 5	@ LSU	7:00
Oct. 7	@ Ole Miss	1:30
Oct. 12	@ Auburn	7:00
Oct. 14	Georgia	1:30
Oct. 19	Kentucky	7:00
Oct. 21	Tennessee	1:30
Oct. 24	Mississippi State	7:00
Oct. 26	@ Arkansas	7:00
Nov. 2	@ Georgia	7:00
Nov. 4	Auburn	1:30
Nov. 9	Ole Miss	7:00
Nov. 11	LSU	1:30
Nov. 16	@ Florida	6:00
Nov. 18	@ South Carolina	12:30

SOCCER

DATE	OPPONENT	СТ
Aug. 31	@ Robert Morris	4:00
Sept. 2	@ Duquesne	Noon
Sept. 7	Kennesaw State	7:00
Sept. 9	@ Mercer	3:00
Sept. 14	MTSU	7:00
Sept. 16	Memphis	1:00
Sept. 19	Alabama State	7:00
Sept. 23	Mississippi Valley	1:00
Sept. 28	Vanderbilt	7:00
Sept. 30	Kentucky	1:00
Oct. 5	@ Mississippi State	7:00
Oct. 7	@ Ole Miss	2:00
Oct. 12	Arkansas	7:00
Oct. 14	LSU	1:00
Oct. 19	@ South Carolina	6:00
Oct. 21	@ Florida	1:30
Oct. 25	Tennessee	7:00
Oct. 28	@ Georgia	1:00
Nov. 2	Auburn	7:00
Nov. 6	SEC Tournament	TBD
Nov. 19	NCAA Tournament	TBD

WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

DATE	OPPONENT	
Aug. 31	Belmont Opener @ Nashville	
Sept. 14	Crimson Classic	
Sept. 29	Loyola Lakefront @ Chicago	
Oct. 13	Chile Pepper @ Fayetteville, Ark.	
Oct. 27	SEC Championship @ Lexington, Ky.	
Nov. 10	NCAA Regional @ Gainesville, Fla.	
Nov. 19	NCAA Championship @ Terre Haute, Ind.	

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

DATE	OPPONENT
Sept. 7	@ UT-Chattanooga Invitational
Sept. 14	Crimson Classic
Sept. 29	Bill Dellinger Invite @ Eugene, Ore.
Oct. 13	Pre-NCAA @ Terre Haute, Ind.
Oct. 27	SEC Championship @ Lexington, Ky.
Nov. 10	NCAA Regional @ Gainesville, Fla.
Nov. 19	NCAA Championship @ Terre Haute, Ind.



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